

H. C. Bradley

WOMAN AS SHE SHOULD BE;

MEMOIRS OF

MRS. MENVILLE.

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OR,

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1607/2083.



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MRS. MENVILLE,

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY MRS. PARSONS,

AUTHOR OF ERRORS OF EDUCATION, MISS MEREDITH,
AND INTRIGUES OF A MORNING.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,

AT THE

Minerva,

LEADENHALL-STREET,

AND SOLD BY E. HARIOW, PALL-MALL.

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A NOVEL

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By Mrs. PARSONS

AUTHOR OF "BRIDES OF BRIDGES" AND "THE HISTORY OF A MARRIAGE"

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1840



W O M A N

S H O U L D . B E .

L E T T E R . I .

ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ.

TO JOHN CHAMBERS, ESQ.

I Am confoundedly vexed and disappointed; I have seen and conveyed a line to Mrs. Menville; I have this morning received the most chilling answer possible; she will not accept the services of a stranger; "her stay in the castle may be very short;" What can she mean by that; has she heard

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again from Menville? I know not what to think, but I am determined this evening to write in my own name; her delicacy may be hurt, but I hope her confidence in me will be strengthened, when she knows I only wish to convey her to her friends. I have seen nothing of Bailey yet, but I persuaded my landlord to go to the castle this morning, and invite him over. Perhaps, Jack, you will not give me the credit of a disinterested friendship, yet I swear to you, I have no sinister views, no duplicity in my intentions, sudden as my reformation may appear, 'tis because I never met with a woman so truly respectable before, and I will serve her to the hazard of my life and fortune. I have this moment parted from Bailey, he luckily called before Tregegle went out, and was introduced to me. I asked him if he knew of any estate in that neighbourhood to be disposed of?

"Not just now," he said, "but he believed Trewarne Castle might be let, if that would



would suit me, for he had received a letter from his master the day before, and he talked about letting the estate, because he was going abroad."

" Could I see the house," I asked,

" Why, yes, I believe I may venture to shew all but one room, if your honour pleases to come over to-morrow morning; I am going into Penzance now, to take a place for one of our maids, lately come from London, and now she's in a hurry to go back again."

I assured him of calling over in the morning, and now I shall write a line to acquaint Mrs. Menville of my design, and entreat permission to see her.

Never was any thing so provoking, I have walked all the evening before the gardens to no purpose; Mrs. Menville never appeared, and if to-morrow I should see her suddenly, I shall run the risk of her displeasure perhaps,

besides exciting suspicion in the man; yet venture I must and will. Her delicacy has taken the alarm at my letter, and she has declined her evening walks. Adieu, Jack, I am devilishly vexed.

Well, all is discovered—but you shall hear. I went at the appointed hour to Tre-warne, Bailey was ready to receive me; he conducted me through the gloomy apartments, so large, dark and uncomfortable, the furniture so shabby, and every part looking so cold and comfortless, that I had almost a fit of an ague upon me. We past one room, which he said was fastened up; my heart was at my mouth, for I supposed Mrs. Menville was there, and it was plain he thought so too, for having passed the door, and looked round the house, we walked into the gardens, which are extensive, but in very indifferent order. Turning suddenly round through a little shrubbery, on a garden chair was seated Mrs. Menville, with her child on her lap, she was caressing the
sweet

sweet infant; 'tis impossible to paint her surprise, or my confusion; she started up,

“ Good God! Mr. Martin?”

“ I beg your pardon,” stammered I, “ I can scarce believe my senses; is it possible Mrs. Menville can be here?”

I turned my eyes on Bailey, the man looked gloomy and suspicious.

“ Yes, sir,” replied she, “ I reside here at present, and do not receive any visits; whether business or chance brought you to this house, you must know the impropriety of any gentleman being seen here in the absence of Mr. Menville. I wish you, sir, a good morning.”

She motioned to go, “ Stay, madam, one minute,” cried I, hurried out of all caution, “ I beseech you tell me how I can serve you.”

"You are very kind, sir, but I have no services to request of you."

"Sir," said Bailey, "you are not the gentleman I thought you. Tregegle said your name was Chambers; I don't understand this business."

"'Tis of little consequence," I replied.

"To me, Mr. Martin," said Mrs. Menville, it is of consequence; you must bear me witness I knew nothing of your being in this country, nor can I, sir, permit, nor will I see you again, however obliged I may be to your intentions."

She then quickly withdrew. Mortified as I was, it instantly occurred to me I had best make a friend of Bailey, therefore turning to him, "Come, Mr. Bailey, go with me to Tregegle's, and I'll explain this affair to you; the man seemed irresolute, but curiosity, I suppose, induced him to acquiesce with my request ;

request; he followed me home. I then frankly explained the whole business, only gave him to understand I was there at the request of Mrs. Menville's friends. The man seemed lost in thought, but after a little pause,

"She seems a very good natured lady; is pleased with every thing, and gives no trouble, and to be sure, 'tis a very cruel thing to her, that a madam should be kept like a lady, and his lady sent down here, poor soul; and to tell you the truth, I have stop't all her letters by master's orders, though it went against my conscience too."

"And where are those letters," said I, hastily.

"At home, sir, and I intended Mrs. Ann should take them up with her."

"No, no, my good friend, send them to the post, you are liable to be taken up for felony, if you detain them."

"For felony, sir! Lord bless my soul, I'll carry them away this very night, and I am resolved madam shall do what she pleases, and as you come from her friends, sir, you are very welcome if she likes to see you."

I shook his hand heartily, with a *couple* of irresistable *arguments*, which I saw poured conviction into his heart. But after all, if she will not permit me to see, or serve her, of what use is my being here; yet *here* I *will* stay, 'till I hear she is comfortable, or until she removes, which doubtless she will if he goes abroad. Would to heaven he and his dulcenea might sink into the deep, never to rise again; pardon me, Jack, but if you knew the two women, you would join most cordially in the wish, and curse the circe that has wounded the bosom of an angel. I am going to write, my friend Bailey has promised to deliver the letter, and I will yet hope I may be admitted to her presence.

Well,

Well, Jack, I may retrace my steps back to London, or go to the devil if I will, for not the least favour can I obtain of this dear cautious woman. I told you I would write; this is my answer, unsealed, to prove, I suppose, she had no secrets.

“Mrs. Menville presents her compliments to Mr. Martin, is much obliged to him for his particular enquiries after her health, which is much amended by the country air, hopes he will pardon the *seeming* incivility of declining his visits, as she has made it a fixed rule to see no company during her residence at Trewarne Castle.”

Thus all hopes of an interview are at an end; she walks no more on the terrace; will receive no company at the house, nor dare I presume to force myself into her presence; yet here I stay, and shall gain all the intelligence I wish for from Bailey, who is now my fast friend. Lord! Lord! Jack, that ever I should dwindle into the humble attendant of

a truly virtuous female, after being for five or six years, the gay, the admired, the successful Bob Martin. Ah! woman, woman! born to make mankind your slaves; were you but sensible of your own worth, preserved your consequence, and to the beauties of your persons, added the more fascinating charms of virtue! How is my self-love mortified since I have known this charming creature! gallantries, pursuits which I thought venal crimes, now appear to my view, attended with the meanest duplicity, the blackest, most treacherous designs, that the most contemptible of men could be guilty of. I look back on the fate of poor Mary Smith, with the deepest contrition, and must honestly confess, that the man who endeavours by his attentions and avowed preference, to gain the heart of an innocent amiable girl, carefully avoiding declarations, vows, or protestations, which may give her a legal claim upon him, at the same time his behaviour in private is so unequivocal, as to inspire affection in the unsuspecting girl, obtain her affection, and then

then triumph in the gratification of his vanity ; such a man is a villain, deserves to be reprobated by the whole sex, and will one day or other feel the stings of conscience as I do now. Yet there are many of those male coquets, those contemptible dangles, that ruin the peace of families, and sink the injured victim to the grave. Poor Mary Smith ! my feelings painfully inform me, I have much to regret, and great reparation to make, before I can procure peace to myself.

There is one service, however, which I have rendered Mrs. Menville, although she knows it not, that of causing her letters to go forward, and as I every day expect news from London, I may furnish her with intelligence through Bailey, that may be of service to her. Didst ever expect Jack to hear that I was devoted to the service of a virtuous woman ? such miracles were alone reserved for Mrs. Menville to effect ; and I have so much regard for you, that I heartily

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wish

wish thou may'st meet with such another, if such there be, to convert thee also.

I have this instant received a letter from Williams. Menville is done up; his losses are considerable, he is preparing to go abroad, and selling his estates to realize all the money he can; let him go, he must support his wife decently, and she can have no cause to regret his absence. I should suppose, from the hint she dropped, "that her stay will not be long in the castle," she designs to remove from thence, when her husband (curse on the name!) quits England. Prithee tell me Jack, from whence originated those arbitrary laws, which make the elopement of a wife sinful and scandalous, are a foundation for a divorce, and brand a woman with everlasting infamy; yet man, that Lord of the creation, who boasts superior wisdom; who, if his word from man to man should dare to be questioned, would risk his life, his future happiness in another world,

world, to revenge the insult, can with impunity violate the most solemn vows, injure another in the dearest part, destroy the peace of an amiable woman, and make two families wretched; yet this man shall only be a man of spirit and gallantry, congratulated by his associates on his success, and received by the female world without reproach. Surely, surely we are too partial to our own vices! I must now go in search of Bailey, and communicate my intelligence. Farewell, I give thee leave to laugh, but I am proof against all thy ridicule.

Sincerely your's,

ROBERT MARTIN.

LETTER

LETTER II.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

MY unknown, "disinterested friend," is at last discovered; would you think it possible Martin should engage in such a romantic expedition? yet upon my word so it is. His designs for coming here, and assuming a disguise both in person and name, are best known to himself, but I have so little faith in the friendship of men, that I shall most undoubtedly refuse every attention from him, nor will I permit his visits on any account. He introduced himself into the house, under a pre-
tence

tence of taking it, as Bailey tells me his master has thoughts of letting the estate altogether; he came upon me accidentally in the garden, and I was most exceedingly surpris'd and disconcerted; however, I gave him to understand civilly, but firmly, that I could hold no conversation, and left him to tell his own story to the servant, which he certainly did to his own advantage, for this morning Bailey told me, he found the stranger gentleman came from my friends, and therefore I might see him when I pleas'd. I told him I should see no company whilst I remained here, and he would do well to obey his master's orders.

“ Dear heart, madam, I am sure you are angry, but I did not know, 'till the gentleman told me, how cruelly you have been used, and I ask your pardon if I have behaved ill.”

“ No, my good friend, you have not behaved ill, on the contrary, I think myself obliged

obliged for your kindness, and approve of your obedience to Mr. Menville's commands."

He bowed respectfully, and left the apartment, saying, "Gracious Lord, was ever the like."

I am extremely uneasy at not receiving a line from you yet, and very apprehensive my letters are stopt; I think I will question Bailey on the subject. Well, my dear friend, 'tis as I suspected, the letters have been stopped by Mr. Menville's orders, but the man confesses that the strange gentleman "told him he was a felon for doing it, and so he sent them all away yesterday, for there was no reason master should make a felon of him, when thank God he was an honest man." I own this is a piece of service, for which I am thankful to Mr. Martin, and gives me a better opinion of him than I before entertained; my mind is relieved from many doubts, and you, I am sure, must have been
very

very uneasy. Good God! an express from Mr. Merville.

I have a most inhuman letter, I will not repeat it to you—he reproaches me severely indeed, but he shall not alter my purpose; it only convinces me of the necessity of adhering firmly to my resolution, never to give up my jointure. A person calls on me to-morrow, by his orders, he will allow me *one* hundred a year, and I may live where I please; Trewarne castle is advertised for sale, and the sooner I quit it the better; he will never forgive my obstinacy, or see me more. Oh! my dear, 'tis very hard thus to be cast off for ever from a husband's love, thrown on the world, to be the sport of a thousand ill-natured tongues, a thousand scandalous conjectures on my conduct, which nobody will believe to be free from blame; when I am deserted by a man who doated on me, who married me from affection only, and can so soon give me up for ever. No! 'tis impossible I can escape censure, and my reputation

tion *must* suffer in the eyes of the world. I have shed a torrent of tears over my sweet child, she has now but one parent to preserve and watch her tender years, and shield her from the world's oppression. I am thankful for the allowance Mr. Menville has given me, 'tis sufficient to support me in the way I shall chuse to live—at present I can write no more.

Mr. Menville's agent has been with me; every thing is concluded, and I have received a hundred pounds, as the first year's allowance, and another note of equal value, as a *present*, to pay the expences of my removal; I did not think proper to refuse it, and having nearly two hundred pounds of my own, I am you see a rich woman.

I have enquired out for a girl, to assist me in the care of my child, which is the only servant I shall keep. Ann is this morning gone to London, and I shall leave this place also in a few days, do not write therefore.

Bailey

Bailey and Susan are much afflicted, and have both offered to attend me, but that cannot be. I have written to Mr. Menville, without any observations on the cruel parts of his letter ; I only lament the loss of his affection, and grieve that I cannot, consistent with what I think is my duty as a mother, comply with all his wishes ; I thank him for the income he has settled on me, and assure him I still look forward with hope that we may one day be re-united ; mean time it shall be my study to deserve his love, by devoting myself to the care of his dear child. This was nearly the purport of my letter, and now adieu, my dear Mrs. Colemore, I shall write no more from this place, although from the situation of my mind, it is more congenial to my feelings, than the most delightful spot in nature could be, but wherever I am, I shall never cease to be

Your truly affectionate

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER III.

ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ.
TO JOHN CHAMBERS, ESQ.

I Shall turn out a Don Quixote in good earnest, and you may expect soon to see published the wonderful atchievments of the renowned Robert Martin, Knight of the most beautiful lady in the world. After all, Chambers, this is but a copy of my countenance, for I am in a horrid ill humour. Mrs. Menville has had an exprefs from her husband ; a lawyer has been with her with deeds and parchments, articles of separation I suppose, but

but I can gain no intelligence ; Bailey says she weeps all the day long (curse on him who gives her cause for it) that she is packing up every thing ; has hired a young girl as her only attendant, and is preparing to leave them, but where she is going they know not. The lawyer told Bailey, " If that lady was my wife, I would not part with her for a thousand worlds." I am always on the watch, lest she should escape me, for go where she will, I am determined to be her guardian, protector and *guide*, if she will permit me.

She has escaped, in spite of all my caution : hear how she managed whilst my horses are getting ready. This morning she sent Bailey to Penzance with a letter, desiring he would wait for the post, if not come in, as she was very anxious to hear from her friends. The fellow called on me in his way, and told me this, which flung me off my guard, and like a puppy, I set myself to write a long letter to Williams, and in short, was near
three

three hours employed before I took my usual faunter round the house. All was still, and I waited and walked at least two hours more, before Bailey returned; he had a letter, which I knew was Mrs. Colemore's hand, I bid him go in and deliver it, and then return to me. The man returned indeed frightened out of his wits,

“ O Lord! sir, we are all undone.”

“ How, why, what's the matter,” cried I.

“ Madam's gone.”

“ Gone! gone where?”

“ Along with the lawyer, sir; Susan says that about a half an hour after I went out, she heard a ringing at the great gate, and when she opened it, the gentleman drove in, in a post chaise, and so madam made the driver fetch down all her trunks, and they were
put

put up to the chaise, except a very great one the gentleman is to fend for."

"But where are they gone?" cried I, stamping.

"Why, Lord, sir, that's the thing, Susan can't tell, they all got into the chaise, and Madam gave Susan two guineas, and left two for me, and, sir, she left this letter for you," pulling one out of his pocket.

"Confound you," said I, snatching it, "why did you not give it me." I tore it open, and found the following contents.

TO ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ.

Sir,

I cannot leave this country without acknowledging myself obliged to your kind intentions in my behalf, though my particular situation would not permit me to receive your

visits, nor can I *ever* admit the visits of any gentleman during Mr. Menville's absence, wherever I am. You must permit me to observe, that as I am denied the delights of society, from *choice* denied, it will give me very great pain, and in all probability, entirely ruin my future prospects, by subjecting me to malicious observations, should any gentleman, how much soever my friend, follow me to the retirement I chuse, and create suspicions which might wound my peace for ever. I flatter myself Mr. Martin will see the impropriety in the same light I do, and then I shall always think myself obliged to his solicitude, and if ever I am restored to happiness, and the bosom of my friends, I shall with pleasure see him included in that description.

EMILY MENVILLE.

Thus, Jack, all my hopes and wishes are annihilated, for I will obey the angel; not for worlds would I give her pain, or suffer
 5 the

the breath of slander to wrong her purity. Wherever she is, I may hear of her through Mrs. Colemore, and I am determined to cultivate her friendship, and her worthy husband's; he was once my aversion, but now with different sentiments of men and manners, my reason bids me respect him. After I had perused the above letter three or four times, I told Bailey she was gone to visit one of her friends, and did not chuse to let me, or any one know where. I put a couple of guineas into his hand, returned to my lodgings, ordered my horses, and shall set off directly for my return to London. A queer sort of an expedition this has been, and my romance is suddenly brought to a conclusion, without my being able to discover whether my mind is most pained or pleased, there is such a mixture of both; but her dear letter will be for ever valuable, though it represses my wishes to see and serve her. I must adore her for the motives which has governed her determination. You will hear

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from me on my arrival in town, 'till then
adieu.

ROBERT MARTIN.

I shall take Mrs. Colemore's letter with
me.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

TIS near a fortnight, my dear friend, since I wrote to you last, and I am now most delightfully situated in Glamorganshire, in a sweet little cottage, with a view of the sea in front, and a beautiful garden, with rising hills, at the back of it. My house consists of a kitchen, two small parlours, and three rooms over, quite large enough for me; 'tis very neatly furnished, and costs me altogether but sixteen guineas a year; there are a few common cottages round us, and the

gay town of Swansea is about seven miles off, which I shall never visit. You will naturally be surprised how I came to know of this situation; it belongs to the lawyer who managed Mr. Menville's business; in the course of the conversation which passed between us, the man, I thought, viewed me with compassion and respect, and as I happened to say I wished much for some retired house, suitable to my small income, he asked me if I was particular as to situation, or distance from town, I told him no;

"Should you like Wales?"

"Yes, exceedingly."

"Why then, madam, I have a neat cottage decently furnished, and pleasantly situated."

"It is the very thing I should like."

"Then,

“ Then, madam, you may go when you please, a tenant of mine is now with me, and shall be your conductor.”

Nothing, my dear Mrs. Colemore, could have happened more opportune, or more agreeable to my wishes. We then concerted together the whole plan; I was desirous to conceal my departure and residence equally from Bailey and Mr. Martin, who I had reason to suppose, watched all my motions; I therefore, on the morning Mr. Watson the lawyer called for me, sent the former out of the way for three or four hours, and proceeded safely on my journey; it was a tedious one, but I arrived in perfect health and safety, with my child, and the girl I had taken, and found the house and garden much beyond my most sanguine expectations. I am now comfortably settled, the air is soft and refreshing, the country beautiful, and unless I should be so fortunate as to be recalled by Mr. Menville, in all probability I am fixed for a long, long time. You will remember,

in the description of my cottage, that I have one spare room to accommodate a friend. I hope no letter of your's will arrive at the castle during my absence, if it does, I must depend on the kindness of Mr. Watson to transmit it; he has promised to call at the post-office, and take up any letters addressed to me, which will, I flatter myself, prevent their being sent on to Trewarne. I earnestly wish to know whether Mr. Menville has left England; if the prosecution goes on, and other matters very interesting to me. Alas! my dear Mrs. Colemore, I endeavour to struggle against sorrow and regret, for lost happiness; I wish for calmness and fortitude to bear those evils I cannot avoid, but I find the task is not an easy one, for though I do not indulge, yet I cannot repress or subdue those painful feelings which a wife and a mother must endure, at the strange, strange reverse a few months have produced in my situation. Believe me, 'tis not the loss of splendour and riches, which can give me a moment's pain, oh! no, 'tis the unhappy connexion which

Mr.

Mr. Menville has formed, 'tis the loss of his affection, the injury his character must sustain, 'tis the reflection that he cannot find happiness attainable in his present pursuits, and that his bosom must be wounded, deeply so, whenever the hour of reflection arrives, and when it may be too late to procure peace to himself or others. For myself, I am as rich as I wish to be, my wants are very few, and being assured my child will hereafter be provided for, I have only to bring her up in that mediocrity of expectations, that may preclude pride or vanity from taking hold of her mind, and to cultivate that mind, "to teach the young idea how to shoot," will henceforth be my only and delightful employment. Will you have the goodness to tell me if Anthony is still at Sudbury, or what is become of him; strange that he should entirely desert a sister who never offended him; it appears as if I was cast off like an alien from all my family connexions. Let me have the happiness of hearing from you soon, but keep my

address a secret, for many reasons, which must be obvious; believe me ever

Your affectionate friend,

EMILY MENVILLE.

Your letter is this moment delivered to me, sent forward by Mr. Watson; a thousand thanks for the affection and anxiety you express; I flatter myself this letter will gratify the one, and do away the other.

LETTER

LETTER V.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE,

THANK heaven, my dear friend, I have at last heard from you, we received three letters at once. 'Tis impossible to give you any idea of our anxiety on your account, and the very day your letters came to hand, Mr. Colemore proposed going to town, and to call on Lady Hartwill, or on Menville himself. We were almost out of our wits with joy when we had the letters, but the contents, particularly of the last, has almost broken our hearts. You certainly acted with becom-

ing spirit and strict justice, in refusing to give up your jointure ; I wish you had done the same by your annual settlement ; wretch as he is to accept your offer, what meanness and injustice ! but I have ever observed, when a man's mind is wholly engrossed by one selfish passion, he will give up all secondary considerations, and oftentimes commit the most flagrant acts of injustice to gratify that ruling passion, particularly when vice is the predominant feature in his character ; and be angry if you will, I must say that I think Mr. Menville that character. When he came to Sudbury, he heard you the theme of universal admiration ; he must have heard too, your particular situation ; he saw you, he loved you ; and found gratification to his vanity and consequence in supplanting another : your unworthy uncle, dazzled by riches, was blind to the injustice ; and your dear parent, solicitous to secure an independence to his children, was persuaded, compelled, I may say, to aid their designs, contrary to his better judgment and goodness of heart. Thus the outset of

Mr.

Mr. Menville's conduct was founded in injustice and cruelty; what could be expected from a man, who too evidently was governed by his passions only. An angel was an unfit companion for such a man. Like minds cling to each other, Miss Shepherd, worthless, vain, volatile and capricious, was the woman best formed to please him, and a wife whose goodness and virtue was hourly a reproach to his conscience, must be got rid of at any rate. But let them go, depend upon it my dear friend, they will find mutual punishment in their mutual crimes, and in a short time heartily detest each other. Mr. Menville has certainly disposed of all his estates, and realized a great deal of money, but I hear he has lost many thousands at play, though you, my dear, never supposed he had that vice—but you was deceived and blind to his faults of every kind; I saw too much, but I knew I should not be permitted to make my observations to you, and consequently was obliged to be silent; but enough of this, I shall write to Lady Hartwill, and inform her of your health and situation,

situation, and from her may obtain some intelligence that may be proper for you to know. If you remove from Trewarne, pray write directly, that we may meet you, for we all join most earnestly (and *will not* take a denial) in requesting you will oblige us with your company. Oh! how happy will you make us all—my dear, dear friend, appoint your day, and we will meet you with transport. My father and mother, who have not been ten miles from Sudbury these twelve years, will be of our party for fifty miles at least. Hasten to us my beloved friend, I will nurse your sweet little Emily, and all our endeavours will be exerted to make you happy.

Your truly affectionate,

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

THREE days since, my beloved friend,
I gave my hand to Sir Charles Wentworth; I knew you would rejoice to hear it, and retired yesterday to my dressing-room, purposely to write, when I was prevented by the arrival of your letter, and two, Sir Charles received from England. Never was surprise and affliction equal to mine, at the contents; you have fought to deceive me into a belief that you was on a pleasant excursion at one of
Mr.

Mr. Menville's feats. Could you think we had no friends or correspondents, to whom your interest was dear, that would not inform us better? yes, my unfortunate Emily (no more Menville, I detest the name) yes, we know all, know that your worthless husband has that infamous Thurkill in his house; that you are banished to the extremity of the kingdom, and that he is going to ruin with all possible expedition. Good God! is this the situation of a woman, whose person and mind is unrivalled, whose merits would be degraded by a comparison with almost any other woman? I am distracted, I told Sir Charles, had those letters arrived two days sooner, I never should have reconciled myself to a second marriage. I could tear my hair for vexation, when I think of the distance between us, and that it will be at least four months before we shall return to England; would to heaven you could come to us, yet I know you cannot: no father, no husband, no brother to protect you; pardon me for enumerating your causes for affliction, I ought not
to

to do that, but I scarce know what I write; the only consolation I can find, is, in your strength of mind and uncommon fortitude; that, and the happy consciousness of not deserving your unmerited ill treatment, will, I trust, preserve your spirits and health from being too deeply affected. Your deference to the character of a worthless husband, and generous concern for my feelings, I am persuaded induced you to conceal from me your situation; your kind motives are evident, and I thank you for them, but "ill news flies on eagle's wings," and tales of scandal are quickly promulgated from kingdom to kingdom. I am interrupted—oh! my dear friend! and to whom, think you, I was called down? my surprise, my joy was inexpressible! to see a much valued acquaintance of mine, the truest, warmest friend of my Emily's! it was Capt. Harley! He arrived yesterday at Spa, with a party of friends, some of whom are ill, and whose stories, he says, are very extraordinary. He eagerly enquired after your health; my confusion at the question alarmed

ed.

ed him, and I found myself under a necessity of telling the whole truth, to avoid the suspicion of concealing still worse intelligence. I will not describe to you his emotions, they were terrible, and I more than once repented having begun my relation, but he kept me to it, and I was obliged to repeat the purport of the letters we had received, without reserve. I will not tax your sensibility, by relating our conversation, for above two hours that he stayed with me ; just as he was about to take leave, Sir Charles came in, I introduced them to each other ; Sir Charles received him with a warmth of attention that delighted me ; he pressed him to dine with us,

“ Excuse me sir,” cried poor Harley, “ I am now unfit for company, but I will do myself the pleasure of calling in to-morrow, for indeed, Sir Charles, I must draw on Lady Wentworth for the principal pleasures I can derive from being at Spa, if you will permit me to be a frequent visitor.”

We

We assured him with great truth his company would be a considerable addition to our happiness, and prevailed on him to promise he would spend the following day with us. It was by mere accident he heard of my being here; he called in at a Coffee-House, and heard one gentleman say to another,

"Do you know Sir Charles Wentworth, who was married a day or two ago?"

"I have seen him," replied the other, "but have not the honour of his acquaintance. Who did he marry, pray?"

"Mrs. Bertie, the niece of Mrs. Moleworth, a pretty widow, with a capital fortune."

This set Harley enquiring where we resided, and brought him instantly to our lodgings. I shall not close this letter 'till after to-morrow, when I am to have some account of Harley's friends.

Captain

Captain Harley kept his promise, and dined with us, but really he looked so ill, and eat so little, that I was quite distressed for him; my uncle and Mr. Sackville are charmed with him, and we all regretted that such a man's happiness should be sacrificed to the vanity and temporary passion of—I was going to say a monster. Harley surprised me very much, by informing me he had corresponded with Mrs. Colemore ever since he left England. A sly puss, she never said a word of it; he is in hourly expectation of a letter from her—she has the history of his friends I find; pray did she ever mention it to you? He has given me a paper to read, which I shall do when I have finished this letter. Keep up your spirits my dearest friend, leave the wild country you are in, take an elegant house at Sudbury (if your brother does not offer you his, which I suppose he will do) live in the bosom of your friends, enjoy yourself comfortably, and be assured a day of retribution will come, when virtues like your's will be rewarded, and
shame

shame and contempt, added to remorse and sorrow, will sting the breasts of those who have wounded your peace. Let me entreat you to write soon, no need of reserve now. I must and will know every thing that relates to you. Poor Harley entreats his respectful condolences for every sorrow you feel, happy if he had the power to draw the thorn from yours and plant it in his own bosom. Sir Charles, my uncle, aunt, and Mr. Sackville, all join in love and admiration of your conduct, with her, who to the last hour of her life, must be your faithful and affectionate friend,

CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MRS. COLEMORE.

FORGIVE me, my amiable friend, that I cannot bring my mind to accord with your wishes; I expected no less from your kindness, than an invitation to your house, and I feel equally obliged to you, as if I accepted your friendly offer; but it will not, do my dear Mrs. Colemore, I am not fitted for company, my mind is not tuned to the harmony of love and friendship; vexation and sorrow have depressed my spirits, though it has not entirely subdued my mind,
but

but in solitude only I find relief. The kind compassionating looks of friends would wound more deeply than even reproach or anger could do. In short, here I am unknown, I may indulge every feeling of my heart; no intruding visitors, no curious eyes examine into the cause of my sorrows, and I can wander for hours by the sea-side, or climb the hills in a calm evening, view the sun declining slowly over the mountains, enjoy the sober twilight, and return unobserved to my cottage. Such are the pleasures which give peace to my bosom, and when returning, I clasp my sweet Emily to my heart, or, sometimes make her a companion of my walks; tell me, my dear friend, where I can enjoy equal tranquillity? tell me, why I should wound the peace of my friends, without affording the least ray of consolation to myself? it cannot be; in this retirement I find repose, in the world I have tasted only the bitterness of sorrow, therefore here I am fixed, perhaps for life. I was called off from my pen by my little girl Patty,

"A poor woman, madam, is taken in a fit at the door."

I hastened to her, she was indeed in a fit, I was much terrified, but with the help of hartshorn, water, &c. she recovered; her countenance was pale and sickly, yet interesting from a pair of expressive eyes; she seemed to be about nine and twenty, or thirty; I helped her into the house; it was long before she could speak, at length,

"Your charity, madam, has restored to life a wretch, little sensible of the blessing, if it is one, to me 'tis only a pilgrimage of sorrow."

"I am sorry to hear you say so," replied I, "health and life were certainly intended as blessings, we may, by indulging grief, injure the one, but we ought not to throw away the other, 'tis the gift of the Almighty, and his will only should recall it."

"Ah,

“ Ah, madam !” answered she, “ my sorrows are of that peculiar kind, that every hour adds bitterness to a life of woe.”

I saw she was extremely weak and faint, I ordered some refreshment, she would only take a cup of milk, and eat one mouthful of bread ; after a little time she rose to take leave.

“ Pray how far are you going ?” I asked.

“ If possible, to Swansea, madam.”

“ Have you friends there ?”

“ No, madam, but I am out of service, and have been ill, 'tis now the watering season, and I hope to get a situation as nurse maid ; I have a recommendation to a lady there.”

“ I wish,” said I, with some earnestness,
“ I wish I could keep you myself, I feel interested

interested for you, but I cannot afford to pay you as you deserve."

"Dear madam," said she, clasping her hands, "talk not of payment, give me a little food, and a coarse gown to cover me, 'tis all I ask for."

"This is extraordinary indeed," I replied, "but far be it from me to take any advantage of your distressed situation; if, as you appear rather in a weak state of health at present, you have an inclination to stay with me for a few days or weeks, I shall with pleasure receive you."

"Is it possible, madam," said she, "you can have so much consideration for a perfect stranger, whose character and connexions you know nothing of, and such is my unfortunate situation, that I dare not appeal to either the one or the other, but merely to the recommendation of the lady I last lived with."

"To

“ To be unfortunate is a sufficient claim upon those who have any sensibility and compassion,” replied I, “ and therefore if you like to stay with me ’till you are in better health, and fit to undergo the fatigues of servitude, you are exceedingly welcome.” The poor creature burst into tears of gratitude, and I found, in the course of an hour’s conversation, that she was sensible and well informed; she said she was the daughter of a clergyman, who dying, left little or nothing for his children; that *her* particular misfortunes originated from her own imprudence, which had unhappily involved others very dear to her, she was therefore content to suffer, conscious that she too justly merited every evil that had befallen her. Perhaps you will blame me, my dear Mrs. Colemore, for receiving a stranger into my house so hastily; frigid caution indeed might have suggested doubts and suspicions, and I may be wrong, yet there was something in this young woman’s countenance that interested me, and her candour in acknowledging she has been

imprudent, deserves some confidence, and I must hope I shall be justified to myself for offering her my small accommodation.

I have this moment a letter from Mrs. (I mean from Lady) Wentworth, the contents have surprised and pained me; she has met with Captain Harley at Spa, with some friends, of whose history he says you are well informed. I am very much concerned, some officious person has wrote Sir Charles Wentworth every thing relative to Mr. Menville and myself, which has given my friends a great deal of uneasiness, and what is still worse, Lady Wentworth has communicated the whole to Captain Harley, the last man on earth to whom I would wish to have my situation known. Thank heaven, she does not know the narrowness of my income, and I beseech you, if your correspondence is continued with Captain Harley, that you will not mention it, I sicken at the idea of giving him pain, or being considered by him as an object of compassion, and I hope
this

this is the last time I shall have occasion to mention his name. Make my warmest acknowledgements to Doctor and Mrs. Ellis, for their intended kindness; whilst I have the gratification to know I am esteemed by such worthy characters, and enjoy the friendship of Mrs. Colemore and Lady Wentworth; whilst I can examine my own heart without fear or reproach; whilst my dear child continues well, and my income is sufficient for all my wants; whilst I enjoy so many blessings, it would be the basest ingratitude to indulge a repining spirit, and I trust I shall ever be thankful to the Almighty for the good I enjoy, and support the evil with patience and resignation. My cottage is delightful, the garden a paradise of sweets, and the prospect from the hills behind, truly picturesque and beautiful; nothing is wanting to render it compleat, but the company of my friends. I will not despair, but that I may one day or other enjoy that desirable addition. Adieu, my dear Mrs. Colemore, my

D 2

affectionate

affectionate respects to your good husband;
you are not so fashionable a wife as to be
offended at the word,

I am ever your's,

Sincerely and affectionately,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

I WRITE immediately on the receipt of your's, to complain, to scold you, my unkind correspondent, for so cruelly disappointing us. We had set our hearts upon having you with us; and now, not content with rejecting the society of your friends, you have settled at an immense distance, purposely that you may not be troubled with our company. But you may depend upon a punishment adequate to your crime. You know, "if the mountain cannot come to Mahomet,

Mahomet must go to the mountain." Mr. Colemore and myself are absolutely determined on a journey into Wales, so see what you will profit by your obstinacy.

I am happy to hear Mrs. Bertie is become Lady Wentworth. As to the circumstance of her meeting an old acquaintance, I expected it, because his last letter informed me of his intended route. The history of those friends you shall know; scrupulous as you are, you must hear a story which does him honour, although the circumstances are truly melancholy. But of that another time.

Your brother Anthony called on my father last week, to settle some business previous to his going abroad with a young nobleman. Mr. Menville having declined acting as a trustee, my father advised him against a scheme which he thought the mediocrity of his income was not equal to: but the gentleman was tenacious of his rights, and would not be reasoned out of his frolic; so at length

300l. a year is allowed him, and a world of good advice given, which I saw might well have been spared. My father asked, "Did he not intend seeing his sister before he left England?"

"He had not time; he heard she was very well at one of Mr. Menville's feasts."

"No, Sir," said my father, with some severity, "Mrs. Menville is not at any house of her husband's. He has thought proper to separate himself from her, and she has buried herself in a small cottage near Swansea."

"Indeed!" replied the unfeeling wretch; "I think she has acted very wrong to disoblige Mr. Menville; to be sure, he conducted his affair awkwardly; but if every woman took it to heart, because her husband had a little affair of gallantry, there would be few married couples live together, he believed. For my part," continued he, "I shall not interfere between man and wife:

and the best thing she can do, is to be blind to what she cannot prevent."

My father was absolutely in a rage: he gave the young man such a lecture, and in such terms, as, I think, he will not easily forget or forgive. They parted on very ill terms. The house is let to a gentleman for an occasional residence, as he lives mostly in town. Your estate is let on a long lease to a Colonel Huntley. The Shepherds are gone to Boulogne; and it is generally believed he has done pretty well for himself at Mr. Menville's expence. Another circumstance I must tell you, which is, that your husband actually gave 5000*l.* with Mrs. Thurkill: the old woman, on her return to Sudbury, boasted of it to some of her intimates in confidence; *and in confidence* it has made its way round the neighbourhood. I always suspected there was some deception in that business. Mr. Menville and his lady mistress left town last Monday for Paris. The trial comes on this week.

The

The story you mention of the young woman you have received into your house is plausible, to be sure, and her situation pitiable. I will not give you my thoughts on the protection you have offered her, because, like most sagacious folks, I will judge by the event: but your motive was doubtless pure benevolence, and I hope she will deserve your kindness.

And now, my dear Mrs. Menville, prepare yourself to receive very soon a torrent of reproaches; and take care I find your boasted Paradise all you have described it to be, otherwise, depend upon it, you will be taken prisoner, and carried off by force of arms. I do not request an answer to this letter, because a personal intercourse will be more gratifying. Heavens bless you till we meet.

Your affectionate,

E. M. COLEMORE.

A letter from town this moment.—The trial came on yesterday. Mr. M. is cast in 5000*l.* damages! Before I could close my letter, I was informed Mr. Martin was below, and requested permission to wait on me. I accordingly admitted him: he apologized for his intrusion, and delivered me a letter, which I find came to hand the day you left the Castle, and which I had entirely forgotten to enquire about, though I recollected you acknowledged the receipt of one letter only from me at that time. He acquainted me with his whole peregrination into Cornwall, execrated Mr. Menville, and then run into a long detail about himself, made me quite a father, or more properly speaking, a mother-confessor. My angel friend had converted him; were all women like her, men would never be villains.”

“ Pretty doctrine that,” said I; “ you want to make the females answerable for all the crimes and follies you commit; you are both tempter and accuser. But pray, how could

could woman err, if man did not, like the insidious serpent, pour poison in her ear? Even the despicable Mrs. Thurkill, frivolous, vain, and capricious by nature, preserved her character, till that blind, unworthy Menville seduced her from rectitude and virtue."

"Oh! do not mention them," cried Martin: "I detest *them*. But tell me, dear Madam, how does Mrs. Menville do? Is she at Sudbury with you?"

"No, indeed," I replied, "she will not honour us so far; nor am I at liberty to acquaint any body with her place of residence. I shall, however, soon visit her, and will make known to her the kind interest you take in her affairs, and the wonderful reformation she has made in your manners. I hope, too, your present good resolutions will be lasting."

"I hope so, too," he said; "and he had one powerful motive which would oblige him to watch over his future conduct, the hope of deserving the esteem of Mrs. Menville and her friends; and then I will presume to request the honour of being admitted as a friend by Mr. and Mrs. Colemore."

"I do assure you, Mr. Martin," answered I, very seriously, "it gives me very sincere pleasure to hear you talk so; and both Mr. Colemore and myself will be always happy to see you."

"This permission, Madam, is what I earnestly wished for. You are going to visit Mrs. Menville: when shall you return to Sudbury?"

"In less than a month," I replied: "leave your address, and Mr. Colemore will readily, I am sure, write you a line on our return."

equal I "

The man was quite delighted, and took leave with the highest respect, and a thousand good wishes for the *charming* Mrs. Menville.

I congratulate you, my dear, on your profelyte. You have really done wonders,—tamed a wild monster, (for such I have been informed he was amongst our sex,) and turned a lion into a lamb.—Once more adieu.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

I HAVE received your kind letter, my dearest Charlotte. Permit me to make my warmest congratulations to you and Sir Charles on your happy union: 'tis an union of hearts, approved by reason, and confirmed by the merits of both parties; there is little doubt, therefore, to be entertained of its stability; and in the felicity of my friends I shall ever find my own.

That you should have suffered any uneasiness on my account, gives me real pain;
for,

for, indeed, my much-loved friend, I am not the unhappy being you suppose me to be. I am pleasantly and comfortably settled, my sweet child improves every day, and I look forward with hope and tranquillity to still happier days; to the time when reason will re-assume her empire, and a baneful influence, which at present embitters our hours, will be no more; when the father of my Emily will return, and embrace with transport a wife and child, dearer to his heart than ever from a temporary separation. Let me entreat you, therefore, my dear Lady Wentworth, whenever you speak of Mr. Menville, to consider him as the husband of your friend; enumerate his virtues, but be his errors forgotten. A time will come, I know it will, when he will deserve your esteem; and if I forgive him, who has a right to condemn him?

I expected in this retired situation to have remained entirely unknown. Chance threw me yesterday in the way of a person that, of
all

all others, I would have avoided, Lord Longfield. I was taking a solitary walk with my child and a young woman who lives with me yesterday morning, on the top of the hill behind my house. We had rambled some time, admiring the beautiful prospects, when a pointer ran past us, and presently we heard a whistle calling him back. We turned, and saw a gentleman walking slowly after us with a fowling-piece in his hand. He quickly overtook us; and bowing as he passed, I was astonished to see Lord Longfield.

“ Good God !” cried he, “ Mrs. Menville !”

“ I hope your Lordship is well,” stammered I.

“ Dear Madam,” said he, “ what a fortunate rencounter is this. Little did I expect the happiness of seeing you in Wales, when I was informed you resided in Cornwall.”

“ I have

" *I have* been in Cornwall, my Lord, and my residence here has been of short duration."

" May I be permitted to ask, Madam, if you live in this neighbourhood?"

" You may, my Lord; the white cottage underneath this hill is my habitation. I came here to live entirely secluded from all my acquaintance: I admit no visits; I pay none. The peculiar situation in which I stand renders either highly improper; and I wish to be acquitted to the world, as well as to my own heart."

" I believe, Madam," returned his Lordship, " there are no doubts respecting Mrs. Menville's propriety of conduct in the breast of any one who has the honour to know her; but I respect your motives for this exclusion; and, however ardently I may wish for an opportunity to wait on you, I would not intrude

trude on a resolution formed by good sense and delicacy."

"I feel myself exceedingly obliged to your Lordship; and if ever I am happy enough to open my doors to my friends, I shall be honoured to include Lord Longfield in that description."

He returned a polite answer, and with a respectful bow took leave, and pursued his walk.

Meeting with him has given me some uneasiness. I find, on enquiry, he has a small house about three miles from hence: 'tis unlucky, for I recollect the malicious reflection Mr. Menville threw out relative to his Lordship's visits in town; and, solicitous as I am, that my conduct shall stand the test of every enquiry, the choice of a house so near him may subject me to those censures which it most behoves me to avoid. Perhaps I had better have gone to Sudbury, and resided
under

under the eyes of my friends; yet my little income could not have maintained me there. In short, I have nothing to do but to avoid any chance of meeting with his Lordship, by giving up my favourite walks on the hill, and resting on the integrity of my heart, endeavour to be as easy as possible under my present circumstances.

I am very much concerned you should have found any necessity to acquaint Captain Harley with my situation. There is a native pride in the human heart that cannot well support the idea of being lowered, either by misfortune or accidental circumstances, in the opinion of those who once held us in respect: and, although from you and Mrs. Colemore I would have no reserves, yet I cannot see that it is at all necessary to tax the compassion or feelings of others who may not be immediately in my confidence.

Forgive me, my dear Lady Wentworth, if I am petulant: there are persons from whom
I would

I would particularly wish to conceal any disagreeable occurrences, and within your family only would I have my affairs mentioned. It would be affectation not to acknowledge myself obliged to Captain Harley for the interest he takes in my happiness; but you must see the propriety of my request, that my name may be mentioned as seldom as possible to him, or his to me.

I have this morning received a letter from Mrs. Colemore, which has given me more pleasure than I could possibly expect. She and her worthy husband are coming to visit me: 'tis truly kind and considerate. They shall find I have health and spirits to entertain them, without being too great a tax on their sensibility and good-nature.

You did not in your last letter mention the state of your uncle's health. I hope, therefore, he is the better for his journey. To him, your worthy aunt, the good Mr. Sackville,

Sackville, indeed, to all my friends, present my best respects: and do you, my dearest Lady Wentworth, assure yourself and Sir Charles, that I am in every situation,

Your faithful,

And unalterable,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER X.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

WITHOUT having, or indeed expecting yet any answer to my last letter, now that I know how to address you, I must scribble every little occurrence that I think will amuse you. Two days ago, at Captain Harley's request, seconded by my own inclination, I called to see Mr. and Mrs. Neville, the Captain's friends: the worthy Clayton is also of the party. I was very sensibly affected on entering the apartment. Mr. Neville is very far gone in a decline;

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his

his amiable wife looks the image of grief and despair. They expressed themselves in such handsome terms on what they called the honour I did them, that I found myself extremely prejudiced in their favour. Indeed, their appearance is prepossessing, exceedingly delicate, gentle in their manners, and that look of restrained sorrow which catches the heart, and awakens all your sensibility. With what grateful delight did they dwell on the virtues of Captain Harley, when he occasionally left the room. The three sweet children call him at every word, my dear sir, my dear papa Harley! He has told them they are his children, and they really pay more attention to him and to his commands than they do to their parents.

It would have been a mere compliment to have asked a return of my visit; for Mr. Neville is too weak and ill to go out, and his lady would not be absent an hour, I dare say, for the world. I therefore only requested permission to wait on them sometimes,

times, and that I might see the children often; both which requests were readily accorded to with a thousand polite acknowledgments.

If Harley could derive any happiness to himself from outward circumstances, he must doubtless be gratified by the affection and gratitude of those worthy people; but it is evident there is a corroding care at his heart, which precludes pleasure or tranquillity. The good Clayton is indeed the Pylades to this Orestes; I never saw a stronger attachment: he laments his disappointments and ill health with the affection of a brother. Of a brother, did I say? An elegant female writer says, "*A friend will always be a brother, but a brother is not always a friend.*" A truth we see too many instances of to controvert.

A very fascinating young man was yesterday introduced to me by the name of Mr. Mansel, whose story being something similar to Martin's, I must relate to you.—This gentleman

tleman has a genteel, though not a large fortune; pleasing in his person, insinuating in his manners, was generally a favourite with the ladies, and where he thought it worth while to take pains to please, succeeded but too well. Several girls successively were captivated, and fancied themselves the favourite fair. Two worthy young women suffered severely from their credulity. He never spoke of *love*, but his attentions were so marked, his looks, his sighs, his jealousy of others appeared to speak an unequivocal language. One of these ladies, in a distant country, gave up her heart without reserve, and daily expected an open declaration of making her his wife. An offer was made him to travel with a friend: he embraced it without hesitation; yet apparently was hurt at parting with the lady, made a thousand professions of unalterable esteem, and—left her to return no more. She, miserable and unhappy, still retains the affection she had so long indulged, and pines away in hopeless anguish. Several others have been fa-

crifices to his pernicious vanity of seducing the affections of amiable young girls, without affording them the power to charge him with broken vows.

Some months ago he followed a young girl, whose family had met with misfortunes, and had been under obligations to him, (for he is really generous and benevolent, they say.) This young creature, with the best heart in the world, had seen but little of mankind; she felt grateful for his kindness to her family; she was gratified by his very particular attentions to her; her heart was deeply impressed with love, almost without knowing it. He saw, enjoyed the discovery, and encouraged it by the most marked particularity and avowed preference: yet in the warmest moments of that preference, he was always on his guard; and though his looks, his actions spoke volumes of affection, yet no expression escaped him that could, in his own opinion, be looked on as a claim on himself. For some months things went on in

in this manner; the young lady's acquaintances expected every day to congratulate her. Her own family, indeed, thought otherwise, and endeavoured to contradict the general opinion, by assuring her it was friendship only. A party of friends going abroad, he proposed being one of the number, took leave of the poor girl with the utmost *sang froid* imaginable, professing, nevertheless, a wonderful deal of friendly good will for her. She felt the blow severely, but, blest with an uncommon resolution and fortitude, she stifled all appearance of vexation and grief from her friends; and, considering his conduct in a right point of view, was above sacrificing her peace to his vanity. She very soon got the better of her attachment, and proves herself deserving real esteem, by the noble efforts she made to conquer an ill-placed affection.

The gentleman, when abroad, still pursued his usual mode of gaining hearts, till one female, with less love and more cunning than others, one evening drew from him an

avowal of *love*. She now thought him in her power; she coquetted, she was sometimes cold, at other times attentive; and by wounding that vanity which had so often wounded others, she absolutely made a conquest of his heart. What beauty, merit, and innocence failed to do, was accomplished by art and coquetry.

In the mean time, a man of much superior fortune paid his addressee to the lady. She gave him her hand; and a few days previous to her marriage, told her quondam lover, that, convinced of his *great friendship* for her, she knew he would rejoice to hear she was so soon to be well settled. He was struck dumb: she left him, nor saw him again till she became a bride.

Unable to bear his disappointment, conscious of his duplicity to others, which was now retaliated on himself, he fled the town, came to Spa, where he has been very ill,
and

and is certainly at present in a very bad state of health.

Sir Charles told me this story; and I was not sorry to hear it, before I thought too well of him; for now I look upon it as a general cause, that we females should plague him all we can. There is nothing more deserving reprehension, in my eyes, than a male coquette; a character of that description will tarnish a thousand virtues, since it originates from a weakness unpardonable in a man, and scarcely to be tolerated in a woman.

I impatiently expect to hear from you. Tell me you are well and happy, if you wish *me* to be so.

Your ever affectionate,

CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.

LETTER XI.

CAPTAIN HARLEY TO MRS. COLEMORE.

ACCCEPT my warmest congratulations, dearest Madam, on your happy union with a worthy man, the object of your choice; and may every succeeding year bring with it an increase of satisfaction. Your obliging letter followed me to Spa, where my friends and self arrived about ten days since.

Poor Mr. Neville declines fast, and is, I fear, in a hopeless state. The afflictions of the mind soon subdue bodily strength. He
has

has been long struggling against the disorder which now makes rapid strides towards a crisis. His amiable wife is sensible what the event must soon be, and endeavours to stifle her own distress, that she may not alarm him. I have procured her the attention of one charming woman, whose kind visits console, and often raise her spirits, when they are sinking from the melancholy scenes before her. That charming woman is Lady Wentworth, whom we have most fortunately met with here. But, what distracting information have I received from her! O! Mrs. Colemore, your sweet friend neglected, deserted by her husband, for an object so every way inferior; driven from his house, and compelled to live on the poor pittance allowed for pocket expences only. Good Heavens! my brain was on fire when I heard the horrible story. She, for whom every man in his senses would have sacrificed his happiness and life; she to be deserted! O! that I could fly to her, that my services could be accepted. But no;

I am of all others the most reprobated, and hardly dare breathe a wish to serve her. The only consolation I had on earth is torn from me, the hope that she was happy; and now what must be her feelings? Distraction is in the thought. Why, dear Mrs. Colmore, have you so industriously concealed from me the ill treatment she must long have suffered under: her father dead, Harry gone to India, the other brother a brute, and forsaken by her husband; thus deprived of all her connexions, without a protector or friend.

Pardon me, dear Madam, for this last expression. I know your attachment, and I know that good Doctor Ellis regards her with even a parental fondness. Let me hope, then, that you have the amiable sufferer near you, that you pour the balm of friendship to sooth her woes; and let me most earnestly request the favour of a speedy answer; tell me every thing, how she looks, how she bears those evils which have fallen so heavily upon her. I would not meet

Menville

WOMAN AS SHE SHOULD BE.

Menville for the world: I know I could not command myself; the consequence would be fatal, and I might add to sorrows I would die with rapture to preserve her from.

I can write no more. I endeavoured to calm my spirits when I began this letter; but they are now in a ferment. My dear amiable friend, adieu. Present my best respects to Mr. Colemore, with a thousand thanks for the indulgence he has granted me in your correspondence. Hasten a few lines to me, if you regard my peace.

I am ever,

Your obliged

And faithful,

FREDERIC HARLEY.

LETTER XII.

MRS. COLEMORE TO CAPTAIN HARLEY.

YOUR letter, my good friend, which I received last night, followed me into Wales, where I have been three days arrived on a visit to Mrs. Menville. Yes, the dear perverse creature has settled herself in a small cottage in Wales, resisting all our entreaties to be with us, rejecting all the services the most perfect friendship could offer her, she will live on one hundred a year, and accept no addition from any one. She is rich, she says, in sufficiency for all her

her wants: they are few indeed. But remember I tell you every thing in confidence. If you ever betray me; if you ever, by word, deed, or look, should chance throw Menville in your way, give him to understand you are acquainted with her situation, or resent by any method whatever his behaviour to his wife, you will entirely destroy her peace for ever. Let that consideration have due weight with you, if she is, or ever was dear to you.

You know Menville has sold his estates, and left the kingdom with that woman Thurkill. The damages awarded against him are five thousand pounds. She is allowed two hundred a-year in consideration of her fortune, half of which was Menville's present; for I am well informed their connexion took place some time previous to her marriage; and being apprehensive of consequences, he thought it best to have a convenient screen. He managed matters badly, to be sure; but they thought themselves unobserved. Too

much security begets confidence; and the husband saw too much. He has got rid of an infamous woman;—and so ends his history.

Menville (my heart rises against him) wanted his injured wife to give up her jointure. She had resolution enough to refuse, for her child's sake; but she has, weakly, I think, resigned her annual settlement, and accepted a hundred a-year, which is at present the whole of her income. Now you know the exact state of her affairs. As to her body and mind, they sympathize with each other; her spirits are depressed, but not subdued: she struggles to appear cheerful, nay even lively; but *it is* a struggle. The languor of her countenance, and the faintness of her smiles, shew too plainly a mind ill at ease: she is much thinner, but is in tolerable health. She was delighted to see us. For my part, I burst into a flood of tears. “Fye, my dear Mrs. Colemore,” said she, “is this the way to make me
happy?”

happy? Do you repent your kind visit, from which I expect to derive so much pleasure?"

"No, my beloved friend, that is impossible; but I recollect the painful difference between your present situation, and when we last met."

"Not a word on that subject," said she. "Some disagreeable things have happened, to be sure; but you find me here pleasantly situated, and with a mind resolved to be satisfied with every thing about me. Your presence considerably adds to my satisfaction: let me see *you* happy, and you will find I have no cause which originates from myself to make *me* otherwise: and depend upon it, my good friend, conscious rectitude, and an observance of our respective duties, renders every evil light, and strengthens the mind to bear accidental afflictions."

The

The dear moralist called for her sweet child: 'tis indeed the counterpart of her charming mother. O, that such a woman, and such a child, should belong to the only man on earth, sure, that could desert them! Do you know that I hate your nabobs, accustomed to eastern indulgencies, a multiplicity of women, a world of splendour, their whole attention taken up by accumulating riches, at the expence, too often, of justice, mercy, or compassion: all the finer feelings of the soul are subdued. By peculation, by distressing the unhappy, they acquire the greatest part of their fortunes; and, with every humane sentiment expunged, they return with callous hearts to their native country, to dazzle the multitude with their magnificence, and triumph over those who have ten thousand times more merit, but are less beholden to chance or good fortune than themselves.

That our amiable Emily should have been sacrificed to a man of this description, is an
eternal

eternal reflection on that uncle who now deserts her. She had no ambitious views; it was to aggrandize others, it was to oblige a parent whom she loved, that she subdued a preferable affection, and became the wife of Mr. Menville, and such a wife as any man but him must have adored. She will not now permit the least reflection on him. "He is *my husband*," said she, yesterday; respect my situation, and spare my feelings. Consider he is the father of my child."

Tears came to her eyes, and I implored her pardon.—Adieu: I am called upon for a walk.

My good friend, I have such a discovery to make to you, as, I hope, will arrive in time to afford some pleasure to the dying Mr. Neville. On our return from a pleasant walk by the sea-side, Mrs. Menville received a letter from Lady Wentworth: she retired to read it. I was playing with the child, and conversing with a very amiable

able young woman, who has been some time with our friend, when she returned. I saw she had been weeping.

"No ill news, I hope," said I, earnestly.

"No other," answered she, giving me the letter, "than that the amiable and unfortunate man, whose story you told me yesterday, Mr. Neville, is past all hopes of recovery."

"Neville!" repeated the young woman, who went by the name of Saunders; "for Heaven's sake, Madam, what Mr. Neville is that?"

"He is, or rather was, a clergyman," I replied.

She gave me a ghastly look, and in a moment fell to the ground. We were exceedingly alarmed, but soon recovered her. When able to speak, "Ah! Madam," said she,

she, "you know his story; had he a sister called Frances?"

"He had," answered I; "and the uncertainty of her fate is a great affliction to him."

"Good God!" said she, clasping her hands, "how wonderful is thy Providence, to conduct me to this spot. O, ladies, I am the unhappy girl who brought ruin and misery on my brother and his family, who have wandered from place to place, dragging on a miserable existence, which I dared not put an end to."

She then begged I would inform her of every thing relative to Mr. Neville. I did so. Poor creature! what torrents of tears she shed; how earnestly prayed for blessings on that generous man who had rescued her dearest relatives from destruction. O! that she could be with her dying brother, to obtain

tain his pardon for all the evils she had brought upon him and his dear Lucy.

We endeavoured to sooth, to comfort her; we assured her Mr. Neville never imputed his misfortunes to her; and that pity and concern for her fate, was all that gave him uneasiness respecting her.

When a little recovered by our tenderness and arguments, she said, "It is but right, ladies, you should know every thing that relates to myself since that fatal hour when I fled from my brother's house; and also a few circumstances previous to that unhappy day.

' My brother mentioned Mr. Binmore's apparent partiality in my favour. He had indeed professed a violent passion for me; and I was much displeased at the advice my brother gave me on that occasion.

' The

‘ The sudden death of Sir Thomas Summers carried his visitors to town. Mr. Binmore promised to write, but I never received a line from him; and the alterations which took place in our family, and removal to my brother’s living, gave a new turn to my thoughts, that occasioned me to think very little of Mr. Binmore.

‘ We had been near two years settled, when he came down to pay a visit to our brother-in-law, Sir William Summers. He renewed his acquaintance at our house, made a thousand excuses for not writing to me, which I was simple enough to accept, and again permitted myself to be prejudiced in his favour. He said his father was a very mercenary, ambitious man; that he dared not marry a woman without a fortune, lest he should be disinherited; but often persuaded me to leave the country, go to London, where he would privately make me his wife, and live entirely unsuspected by his father, who was, from infirmities, hastening fast to the grave.

grave. A thousand specious arguments he used to deceive me, and succeeded but too well. We used to meet almost every evening in an alcove at the bottom of the shrubbery. The consequence of these nocturnal visits was fatal to me.

‘O, let no modest young woman ever consent to meet the man privately, that dares presume to urge a clandestine marriage: let her for one moment reflect, she will see only self-gratification in a proposal of that nature, which must degrade her in her own eyes, incur suspicions shocking to delicacy, and give the man himself a very indifferent opinion of her discretion and prudence. Had I not foolishly listened, and as weakly consented to accompany him to London, he would never have dared to hope I should forget the duty I owed myself. One improper concession leads to another; and it is very difficult to draw back and recover a false step. I found it so; and though continually displeased at his freedoms, I had not
refo-

resolution to withdraw myself from him, and fell a victim to his baseness and my own folly.

‘ It is needless to describe my misery, when reflection shewed me what a wretch I was. To remain at my brother’s house was impossible; yet what was to become of me, if I ventured to quit it, and go to London? In short, ladies, not to tire you, that evening in which we were overheard by my brother, he was more than usually earnest with me to accompany him, swore he could not live without me, and assured me he would marry me at the death of his father; promised me a companion of my own sex, and every delight London could afford. I was weak enough at last to consent; and the following day but one was fixed on for our removal.

‘ I returned to the house, under the oppression of every feeling which a sense of my own misconduct, the tears and distress of my

my friends could raise in a mind not totally abandoned to vice. A note I received from him next day by my brother's servant, who was in his confidence, informed me he should not see me that evening, but requested I would meet him at an early hour in the morning, to settle our intended journey, which was to take place towards the close of that day.

‘ In the evening of this day previous to the meeting, I was walking in the garden, contemplating my unhappy situation, when my brother's footman ran through the garden; seeing me, “ O, Miss Neville,” cried he, “ I fear Mr. Binmore is killed by my master; and God knows what mischief may happen in my mistress's room: pray run thither.”

‘ Without time for thought, almost distracted, I flew to my sister's apartment. The first object I saw was Sir William Summers to all appearance dead, my sister fainting,

ing, my brother the image of despair. Unable to support the scene, I run back, not knowing where to go, when I again met Samuel the servant,

“Where, where is Mr. Binmore?”

“Dead, dead, madam, in the shrubbery, but some folks shall repent it.”

I flew to the shrubbery, there lay the unhappy Binmore, a victim to his baseness; for a moment I was senseless, but recovering, I conceived the idea of flying from the house entirely; I walked as fast as possible; I had a bonnet on and a loose shawl, which I wore in the gardens. Guilt, terror and affliction lent me wings; I determined to go to our native parish, though seventeen miles off, and apply to an old servant, who had been nurse maid to me and my sisters, and was married to a farmer there. I walked on without being fatigued, and 'tis astonishing that I kept the direct road, under the agita-

tions which oppressed me. It was a remarkable fine star-light night; about six miles from home I was overtaken by a cart which carried goods, and was going through the village I designed to rest at towards London; I gladly accepted the offer of the driver for a lift, as he called it; was set down at the head of the village where there was a cross road, and told the man I was going the cross way to another village; after some little time I followed the cart at a distance, and arrived at the house I wanted, about six o'clock in the morning. The mistress of it, Mrs. Richards, was up; never was greater surprise than she expressed, at seeing me. As I knew I could depend upon the integrity of this good creature, I very soon had resolution enough to acquaint her with the dreadful occurrences at my brother's house. The poor woman was extremely shocked, but seeing the necessity of concealing me, she carried me to a very decent chamber.

“ Stay

“ Stay here, my dear madam, make yourself easy, I shall call you a relation of mine, as for the rest, I will take care.”

‘ Overcome with fatigue and distress of mind, I gladly retired to bed, but in less than three hours I was taken extremely ill, and in a very short time an event took place, which though it gave ease to my mind, endangered my life, for it was near a fortnight before I could be moved from my bed, or make use of proper nourishment. My finances were but small, I had four guineas and a half in my purse, a ten pound note in my pocket book, a handsome gold watch, and a diamond ring which my sister Neville had presented me with. I had no clothes but those I had on, and solicitous that no one of my family should know what was become of me, I did not dare to send for more. Mrs. Richards was as tender of me as if I had been her own child; she made enquiries about my brother, and heard that he had fled, being accused by his own servant, of two murders;

ders; that my sister and her children were at Mr. Wellford's, and Lady Summers a violent prosecutor. After much deliberation I told Mrs. Richards I was resolved to go to service; that as a nursery or lady's maid I thought I might succeed, but it must be a great distance from that neighbourhood. She undertook to enquire out a situation for me, whilst I was slowly recovering. When I reflected on my follies, my vices which had ruined myself and family; when I thought of my brother, his Lucy and children, I suffered pangs unutterable; and could have welcomed death as a blessing. One day my kind hostess came and told me, she had heard of a lady who wanted a decent young person to attend on a child three years old, and to go with her to Wales. I gladly accepted of the intelligence, waited on the lady, and was hired. With her I have constantly resided 'till lately; the little girl was sent to a boarding school six months ago, and I remained with my mistress, who treated me with the utmost kindness, until unhappily her husband,

husband, who was rather a gay man, and frequently visited town, was drawn in by a friend, to be bound for a large sum, and then absconded. This event ruined the family I lived with; my master was arrested and confined, his creditors all fell in upon him, and I fear his deliverance is far off. My mistress was unable to keep me, and determined to go to her husband; she gave me a character and recommendation to a lady in Swansea. The parting with this dear lady, and the agitation of my mind in being thrown again upon the world, affected me deeply, and brought on a fever which held me for near three weeks. Soon as I recovered, I prepared to go to Swansea; I walked, to save money, and being very weak, just as I came to Mrs. Menville's door, a faintness seized me, which rendered me incapable of going farther.'

"This dear lady's goodness," added she, pointing to Mrs. Menville, and addressing me: my friend interrupted her.

“ It was the hand of Providence, my dear Miss Neville, that conducted you here ; I am only an humble instrument, I hope to procure you peace and comfort.”

‘ The unfortunate girl made a thousand acknowledgments, and we acquainted her with every particular relative to her brother and family. She begs, and entreats you will say every thing you can to her brother and sister ; if they forgive her, she shall be easy ; if they remain abroad, she wishes to be with them. She says, she has heard her sister Welford has been dead these three years, but she never made any application to them, not being able to support the idea of appearing to them in the despicable light her follies obliged her to assume, and which she was conscious she too justly merited.’

‘ You will now, my good friend, acquaint Mr. Neville with what you think proper of this story ; doubtless it will be a satisfaction to him to know she is alive, and in good hands.

hands. Mrs. Menville treats her like a sister, and feels double pleasure in so doing, now she knows her to be the unfortunate Frances. Mr. Colemore and all friends here join me in sincerest good wishes to Mr. and Mrs. Neville, the good Clayton and yourself,

I am ever,

Your obliged friend,

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER XXI.

MRS. COLEMORE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

HERE I am, my dear Lady Wentworth, at one of the sweetest spots in the country, and with the friend of my heart, whose merit rises upon me every day; I am sure adversity is *her* shining time, for her patience, her sweetness of temper, her attentive kindness to her guests, her duties as a mother, altogether claim admiration and respect from those who are happy enough to know her. She has only one servant, and that a girl, yet every thing is done with such order and regularity,

gularity, as if there were half a dozen to assist. She rises very early, and the business for the day is settled before we assemble to breakfast. The house is like a fairy palace, very small, but elegant, and encircled with roses and woodbines. The first day of my arrival, its charming mistress said,

“ Now my dear Mrs. Colemore, look on your visit to me as a rural excursion, where you may expect good cream, butter and fruits, but no delicacies, no luxuries, beyond that and a barn-door fowl. I will not pay my friends so poor a compliment, to believe they wish me to step out of my family way,” and, added she, smiling, “ you know it behoves me to be a little economical; nevertheless, the warm welcome of friendship shall atone for the deficiencies of my table, and your indifferent accommodations.”

I told her most truly, “ that to see her well and happy, was every luxury I expected, and her company in a cottage, superior

to every other accommodation that could be offered me."

She wears only black silk ; I remonstrated a little with her on keeping on that fable habit so long.

" Have I not lost a father and a husband ?" replied she ; " have I not cause to mourn, and can a sorrowing heart find pleasure in dress ? no, I have done with show and finery ; neatness now is the height of my ambition, and 'tis fit that appearances should correspond with my feelings."

" Ah ! my dear friend," cried I, " then your cheerfulness proceeds not from the heart."

" Indeed it does," said she, " I may grieve sometimes, and sigh for past happiness, yet I can be cheerful, because my heart tells me I have not deserved to be deserted, and because I know the infatuation cannot last
for

for ever. You will yet see me a happy woman; I am sure you will; my hopes overbalance my fears, and therefore I ought to be in spirits."

I wrote Captain Harley some days since, and suppose he has communicated the contents to you; poor Miss Neville is miserable, from her present suspense respecting her brother's health; I do not (indeed it would be cruel to) flatter her with hopes of his recovery. I point out Mrs. Menville as an example of patience and fortitude, and bade her learn the painful lesson of being resigned to inevitable evils. Poor girl! with a look of inexpressible sorrow, she said,

"Oh, madam, am I a novice in the school of adversity; have I not suffered under the most bitter *self*-reproach, under the conviction of being the cause of all the miseries my family now endure? what but patience and resignation, can have supported me

F 5

through

through so many horrors as are attendant on conscious guilt, and unavailing repentance !”

She wept bitterly ; I besought her pardon, and tried to sooth her into more composure.

Yesterday evening, as we were rambling over the hills, I was struck with the appearance of a man standing on the declivity, who just turned his head as we passed ; I never saw a countenance so severe and stern ; he looked, from the transient view I had of his face, to be at least sixty, and to have the appearance of some fashion about him ; his look, however, shocked me ; I begged Mrs. Menville to quicken her steps to the house, and was obliged to tell her I was alarmed by that man ; we were alone, and the place was solitary ; she caught my fears, and we proceeded with all the haste we could, when suddenly Lord Longfield met us ; I heartily rejoiced—not so my friend, she wished to have avoided him, but that could not be ; he approached, and paid his compliments to

us,

us, congratulated Mrs. Menville on having a companion in her solitude; observing I kept looking back, he said,

“ You seem disordered, ladies, I think, Mrs. Colemore has a look of apprehension.”

“ You are right, my Lord, we have just passed a man, whose terrific appearance has extremely hurried me.”

“ I know the gentleman you mean,” said his Lordship, “ nor am I surprised at your fright, for I really never saw a countenance of so much severity in my life.”

“ Pray who is he ?” I asked.

“ That I cannot tell,” replied his Lordship, “ but I daily see him on the hill, his eyes fixed on the sea; once I saw him clasp his hands together, as if in grief, and hastened towards him, with a view of offering some assistance; but as I drew near, he turned

his head, surveyed me with a look of fury and distraction, and then rather run, than walked over the hill, and down the opposite declivity, where I lost sight of him. Since that time I have never ventured to approach him, only move my hat, which he returns; and I have thought for some days past he views me more attentively, and with less ferocity."

"I would give a good deal to know all about him," said I.

"I am equally curious," returned his Lordship; he then enquired after Mr. Colemore, and requested he might have the pleasure of seeing him at Longfield Vale, about four miles off. I promised to deliver his polite invitation, and when we came within sight of our house, he took leave of us, to the great relief of Mrs. Menville, who had a thousand apprehensions he would accompany us home. Mr. Colemore will wait on his Lordship to-morrow.

Now

Now pray, dear Lady Wentworth, write soon, every thing, and about every body that can interest us; I have this day promised my friend to stay one month beyond the time I intended; I cannot say she had much difficulty to persuade me to a thing so agreeable to myself. She desires her best wishes for your happiness, and will write very soon. Present my respects to Sir Charles, and believe me ever, my dear madam,

Your sincere friend,

E. M. COLEMORE.

Pray present my compliments to Captain Harley, and the good Nevilles.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

CAPTAIN HARLEY TO MRS. COLEMORE.

YOUR letter, my dear obliging Mrs. Colemore, has occasioned me much pain, and some pleasure. Poor Mr. Neville was alive when it arrived; *was*, I say, for alas! he is now no more; his sufferings are over, and I hope he is enjoying a blessed immortality! I thought it best to communicate your intelligence respecting Miss Neville, to her sister; it very greatly affected her, and she was doubtful whether her husband had strength to support tidings he so little

little expected; he was then confined to his bed. We went in together, he saw our emotion,

“ My dearest Lucy,” cried he, “ spare me the torture of seeing you unhappy; you have a friend, a protector, to God and him I leave my wife and children.”

Mrs. Neville could not speak; I soothed and made him easy, and when he was a little composed, I asked,

“ Could he support an agreeable surprise, to know the fate of one, for whom he had suffered much anxiety?”

“ Good God!” said he, “ is it of my sister, of poor Frances?”

“ It is,” I replied, “ she is alive, and with one of the most amiable of women, Mrs. Menville.”

He

He clasped his hands, "My friend! my guardian angel," exclaimed he, "you are ever the messenger of consolation — my God I thank thee," said he, looking up, "my sister has been preserved from the dreadful crime I feared, she has not given herself up to destruction, and is protected, like her fortunate brother, by goodness and benevolence—let me hear all, sir, you have given me new life."

I read her story to him, he was deeply affected, and again returned thanks to Providence, for conducting her to Mrs. Menville's, "the only house, perhaps," said he, "where sickness and poverty could have found an asylum."

He entreated me to write directly, that he might, if he could hold a pen, send one line to comfort her; that line you find enclosed, he wrote directly, and that night was more easy and composed than many preceding ones, but yesterday morning he was very
visibly

visibly altered, and when the physician came in, he confirmed my apprehensions, that he was dying. Not to dwell on the melancholy theme, I shall only say, he expired about ten at night. This morning Lady Wentworth came to take Mrs. Neville to her house, but she is incapable at present of being removed, and her ladyship kindly stays with her; a scene of the same melancholy kind may be expected at her own house, for I think Mr. Moleworth will not live long, unless a very great change takes place in his state of health. And now, my dear Mrs. Colemore, you will, after Miss Neville has got the line her brother wrote, prepare her for the stroke she will naturally expect, though doubtless the shock will be severe; tell her he died blessing her, with his wife and children, and with the brightest hopes of everlasting happiness. Poor man! his sufferings have been great, and his fate, among a million of instances, proves the immortality of the soul, and that the persecuted on earth, if good and virtuous, will obtain a reward hereafter.

after. It would be arraigning the goodness of God to suppose otherwise, for he had no crimes of his own to suffer for, it was the vices and injustice of others, that brought upon him shame and reproach, drove him from his country, and harrassed him, 'till he could bear no more. All is now over, and he is happy!

Oh! my good friend, what has Mrs. Menville borne from her cruel husband! *she*, reduced to live in a cottage, on a hundred a year, and will not accept even of a residence from the friends of her heart; she who acts from such rigid rules of decorum and respect to a man, insensible of her merit. Oh! my friend, what can be done for such a woman, who submits to every inconvenience, every degradation, rather than receive the slightest favour, or lessen her consequence with herself? I admire, I adore, yet am displeased with her. Why should she, from motives of delicacy and deference to a worthless wretch, sacrifice her peace of mind, and every indulgence

indulgence she has been accustomed to, and now more than ever wants? I cannot live at this distance, I must come to England soon, when I can settle every thing for Mrs. Neville and her children; perhaps it may be two months yet, before I can quit this place; do not let me languish for intelligence, for heaven-sake write me constantly every thing about this angelic woman. I will not seek Menville, depend upon it I will not; and should chance throw him in my way, I will avoid him like a venomous serpent.

This instant Clayton came to me, with letters he had received from England, relative to his enquiry after the Neville family. Mrs. Wellford is dead, and Mr. Wellford has quitted that part of the country where he formerly lived, and 'tis said is gone to America, to an uncle he had there. Lady Summers, who married Mr. Neville's curate, and gave him possession of the living, had buried her husband, and is in a bad state of health. A gentleman who rented Sir Thomas Summers's house,

house, left between the two sisters, had refused to pay more than a moiety of the rent, 'till the death of Mrs. Neville could be proved, and there are now in his hands, near seven hundred pounds for her, which he will pay when properly called upon. I am very happy to hear this, as I know it will greatly please Mrs. Neville; and it was very extraordinary Mr. Wellford never made any demands of it for his brother-in-law, and still more surprising he should drop all correspondence with a man he professed so great a friendship for. However, the family may now return to England, and receive their own rentals.

Lady Wentworth has just looked in upon me; she requests her best love to Mrs. Menville and yourself. Mrs. Neville, she said, desired her grateful acknowledgments for the protection of her sister, to whom she will write the first moment she can hold a pen, and hopes they shall soon meet to part no more. Write, pray, dear Mrs. Colemore, as soon

soon as possible ; would to heaven you could prevail on Mrs. Menville to accompany you back to Sudbury, I cannot bear the idea of her living alone in a cottage, so far from her friends ; heavens bless her, and you also, for your generous friendship.

I am, dear madam,

ever sincerely your's,

FREDERIC HARLEY.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

-MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

“**T**ELL me, dear Lady Wentworth, if I have been ungrateful for the blessings I enjoyed; if I have murmured or repined at the adverse fate which has befallen me; if I have not strove to conduct myself with propriety, and avoid the stings of envy and malice? my own judgment may deceive me, partial as we are to ourselves, I may have committed errors without being sensible of them; my heart acquits me, but the world condemns me. Alas! I am now
humbled

humbled indeed. I have this morning received a letter from Mr. Menville : these are the contents."

MR. MENVILLE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

You did well, madam, when you chose retirement, to seclude yourself in Wales, unknown to every one but Lord Longfield ; the choice was excellent, no doubt, and perfectly consistent with the character of a lady, who through the kindness of a convenient friend, could carry on a correspondence with her quondam lover after she became a wife. How have I been deceived by a shameless woman, whose delicacy and virtue would not permit her to sit at table with one of *suspected* reputation ! but, madam, the veil is withdrawn, my eyes are opened, and I chuse you should know they are so. Your conduct is no more my concern, and I am no longer at a loss to know your advisers, in presuming to resist my will, but let those impertinent people have a care, though you are beneath

my notice, they are not, and may repent their officiousness.

W. MENVILLE.

Tell me, dear Lady Wentworth, how to support this heaviest of all evils, a murdered reputation; who is it I have offended so much as to make them my enemy, to be a spy upon my actions, and represent me in such a horrid light to my husband? Captain Harley's correspondence with Mrs. Colemore is known, and I am supposed to be interested in it; heaven knows I never saw a single letter, nor did she ever mention to me but once, her correspondence with him.

"What can I do? how is it possible to undeceive a man, so prejudiced against me. All but this I could have borne with patience; poverty and ill-treatment I was resigned to, but reproach, shame and calumny subdues me quite. Mr. Colemore has offered to write, but I will not, on any account,
draw

draw him into an interference which might turn out disagreeably, and make me more miserable. I shall answer his letter nevertheless; 'tis my duty, far as I can, to clear myself from unjust suspicions; I do not expect credit indeed, but I ought not to be silent under reproaches and insults I do not deserve. Oh! my dear friend, like an evil genius, Mrs. Thurkill directs his mind to my destruction; surely she might content herself with depriving me of his love and protection; she need not invent falsehoods, to make me infamous in his eyes. What a forlorn wretch I am, without father, husband, brother or uncle to support me! where can I direct my steps? my best friends are branded with suspicions, I must lay down my pen, my spirits will no longer support me.

LETTER XVI.

MRS. COLEMORE IN CONTINUATION.

OUR dear Mrs. Menville is indeed subdued; reproach, and suspicion of crimes impossible for her to commit, has struck her to the heart; she has had two fainting fits; I have prevailed on her to go to bed; the dear innocent sufferer looks the image of despair. How unfortunate that Lord Longfield should be so near, to give even a colour of suspicion for some malignant mind to work upon. A thought has just struck me, has Sir Charles, has Mr. Molefworth

Molesworth any particular friend of consequence in Paris, to whom you could entrust all her letters to you since her marriage, methinks, could he be brought to read them, they would strike conviction to his mind, more than any thing we could assert. If you are of the same opinion, hasten those unequivocal proofs of her innocence—but for heaven's sake, let not Harley know of this business. I must and will prevail on her to return with us, she shall not remain here, a prey to grief and despair. I enclose a copy of her letter to Menville. Adieu, dear Lady Wentworth, I hardly know what I write, but depend upon my care of our injured friend,

Your's most truly,

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER XVII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO MR. MENVILLE.

YOUR letter, sir, I have perused with that surprise and affliction which a much injured wife must feel, at being wounded with an accusation of crimes, a stranger to her soul. For you to inflict, and for me to suffer, seems the hard lesson you have laid upon me; but could you not be contented with torturing my heart, must my fame be murdered, must my character be sacrificed, to bring me more on a level with my cruel enemy?

enemy? Ah! Mr. Menville, you must know I am unjustly accused, your reason acquits me, I know it does. In justice to myself, sir, I must declare, upon my faith and honour, I never have *seen*, nor even have heard *read* to me, one line of Captain Harley's writing, since I became your wife, nor did I know Mrs. Colemore and he corresponded, 'till she was about to become a wife, and then his name was mentioned but once to me. It was a decorum I laid upon myself to observe, not to have the smallest knowledge of a person, who had once been on the eve of a near connexion with me, and I have strictly fulfilled every duty in that point, which delicacy to you and myself could enjoin.

As to your charge respecting Lord Longfield, your own attorney, Mr. Watson, can witness for me, that residing in Wales was entirely a proposal of his, to occupy a house of his own, just then vacated; and so little was my knowledge of his Lordship, that I had been some time settled in this place, be-

fore I knew he had a house in the neighbourhood; he never has visited me; I met him once, for I scorn to tell an untruth, nor does any action of my life require concealment or palliation; I met him by accident; his surprise was equal to mine; I told him I neither received nor paid visits, he had delicacy enough to allow the propriety of my resolution, and never intruded on it after. Thus much, sir, I write, in justice to myself, I must say, it is not in respect or deference to you, who could load me with accusations, you must be sensible I do not deserve, and who can abandon an innocent wife and child to the censures of the world. One day you will make me reparation, and whenever that day arrives, you will find neither unkindness nor reproach has lessened the sense I entertain of *my* duties, and the father of my child, when he deigns to consider *her* as *his*, will be received with open arms by an affectionate wife.

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

MRS. COLEMORE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

TWO days since, my dear lady, I dispatched a letter to you, which I dare say has given you much uneasiness, I therefore write immediately, that you may have the satisfaction to know our valued friend is much better, and I hope will soon be superior to any grief; for calumnies, all who know her, know it is not in the chapter of possibilities she could ever deservedly incur. Mr. Colemore dined yesterday with Lord Longfield, he has been frequently there lately.

ly, and is very much attached to him. My Lord greatly laments the unhappy situation of Mrs. Menville, and execrates the husband, and his infamous companion. You may remember, in a former letter of mine, I mentioned a man whose appearance had frightened us in our walk on the hill; Lord Longfield has obtained his confidence; poor man! his story is very melancholy, and I have permission to acquaint you with it.

Mr. Chapman was a younger son of a baronet, was designed for the mercantile line, and sent to Holland, where he resided some years. On his return, his father advanced a handsome sum, and placed him in partnership with a very respectable merchant. For near four years every thing succeeded to their wishes; many overtures had been made to young Chapman to marry, but his heart being untouched, he declined entering into any engagements, from motives of interest only. The failure of a very capital house in Jamaica, proved of very serious consequences

to

to Chapman's credit; they found it absolutely necessary one of the partner's should go over to the West-Indies, and investigate their affairs; the elder associate was married, consequently the younger one voluntarily offered to go, and very soon embarked on his voyage; it proved a favourable one, and without any accident he arrived at Jamaica. To his great vexation he found every thing much worse than he expected; the house had failed for such an immense sum, as drew in others to a similar situation; and in short, he found there were no hopes of recovering any thing, the credit of their own house was involved in the general wreck. Whilst he remained on the island, he frequently visited at a Mr. Paterson's, a man of very considerable property, and an only daughter, who was sought for in marriage by many of the most opulent people in the island. She was handsome, sensible and good. Mr. Chapman very soon conceived a warm passion for this young lady, and as lovers eyes are pretty quick, he could discern a very distinguishing partiality in her

treatment of him. Mr. Paterfon was a man of sense, probity and good nature. He pitied Mr. Chapman's situation and disappointments, he did more, with a liberal mind, he offered to take him into partnership, though from the wreck of his fortune at home, he had very little to expect in the pecuniary way. An offer like this was not to be rejected. He remained on the island, having written to his former friend, who had been compelled to retire from business, and live in the country with his wife's family, who were persons of fortune. He wrote also to his father and elder brother. He now managed the business for Mr. Paterfon extremely to his satisfaction; he saw the growing partiality between the young couple, nor did he disapprove of it. "Sophia is very young," said he one day to her lover, "I observe how matters are between you, but I depend upon your honour, and her prudence and obedience to me, that no particular explanation or engagement takes place between you, until you have resided with me two years—at the expiration

expiration of that time, if you love each other, I will give you my daughter, and the whole of my business. An offer so truly generous, impressed Chapman with the deepest gratitude; it stimulated him to deserve it; and in short, at the expiration of the two years, he was blest with the hand and heart of the lovely Sophia. For six years they enjoyed uninterrupted happiness; she had two children, a boy and a girl. Nearly six years after their marriage the good Mr. Paterson died, a loss severely felt by his children, who truly loved him. Soon after he received a letter from his father, mentioning the death of his brother, his own ill state of health, and entreating him to hasten over to England, that he might see him once more before his eyes were closed for ever. This letter gave the affectionate pair much concern; the request of a dying father must be complied with; Mrs. Chapman was very far advanced in her pregnancy, and unfit to risk the fatigues of the voyage; she insisted on going with him, he determined to wait

'till her delivery, rather than take her in that situation. At length, by the interposition of a family they were exceedingly intimate with, it was settled that Mr. Chapman should go in the first ship, and Mrs. Chapman, with her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Baris, and their family, follow him as soon as she could do it with safety. This being the plan fixed on, Chapman made up his affairs, and taking a moiety of his property with him, the remainder to be brought over by his beloved wife, he took his departure from Jamaica, and arrived safe in England, time enough to close his father's eyes, who expired within a fortnight after his arrival. He was now Sir Edward Chapman, with a good estate in Leicestershire. He amused himself in embellishing his house and gardens against the arrival of his dear Sophia; from whom he had received one letter, and he was extremely anxious to hear of her safe delivery. At length news came from Mr. Baris, Mrs. Chapman was brought to bed of a fine boy, perfectly safe and well; and as soon

soon as her health was re-established, they should embark for England. He soon after had another letter from his wife, she was quite well, and they designed to embark the following week. He now daily expected them, a fortnight, a month elapsed, and no accounts, he began to grow very uneasy. One morning taking up the daily paper at breakfast, it was mentioned, that a large ship from Jamaica, in making for Falmouth in a dark night, had struck upon the rocks at Scilly, and foundered, every person on board perished, but two men and one boy who swam on shore. It was added, there were many passengers on board. This paragraph froze his senses; it was some hours before he returned to reason. He then ordered a carriage, and drove with all speed to Cornwall; he travelled night and day until his arrival at Falmouth, he there made every possible enquiry relative to the ship; one of the men was still at Falmouth, being much bruised by the rocks; from him he learnt the fatal story, that his wife and three children, with Mr.

and

and Mrs. Baris, and all their property was lost for ever ! although he expected, he was not prepared to sustain the fatal news ; he was taken ill of a frenzy fever ; his younger brother, a clergyman, was sent for express ; after every method for his recovery was tried in vain, his brother conveyed him to the neighbourhood of London, where he remained for nine years, and very unexpectedly recovered his reason by an accident of falling from a chair against the side of the door, which cut his head, and he bled to that violent degree, his death was hourly expected ; but though reduced extremely low, he recovered not only his health, but his senses, and a perfect recollection of what had befallen him. Being freed from his confinement, he made over his whole fortune to his brother, except two hundred a year, he then came into Wales, took a small cottage in the valley, with one elderly woman to attend him, and for years has frequented the side of the hill where he sees the sea, and has often been over-heard addressing that cruel element in
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the most melancholy terms. He shunned all society, and from the sternness of his countenance, no one ventured to address him. He said there was something touching and melancholy in Lord Longfield's appearance, which attracted his notice, a sympathy which stole upon his heart, and induced him at last to admit of his conversation. He now visits his Lordship frequently, conditioning no other visitor is admitted when he is there. My Lord says he is a pleasing intelligent man, but an habitual melancholy, a sense of his misfortunes, which he ever deploras, renders him at times very unequal and desultory in his conversation. "A wife, three children, my best friends, all, all lost at once; great God, I revere thy judgments, yet I must think my destiny severe!" such is his language frequently; my Lord tries to soothe and comfort him, and wished him to go with him for the summer abroad, to give a diversity to his thoughts. "No!" cried he, "here I will live, in this spot I will die, in view of that terrific element which has
6 robbed

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robbed me of every comfort upon earth. Fancy sometimes brings my wife, my dear children to my view; I see their spirits dancing on the waters, and waiting for me; in a little time I shall join them, and be no more."

Lord Longfield said, there was such a solemnity in his manner, such a wildness in his look, that he did not dare to urge him farther. He owned to his Lordship, the sight of women, particularly young and handsome ones, were his aversion.

"Is not this a melancholy story, my dear Lady Wentworth? there is nothing I think so distressing to one's feelings, as hearing of woes beyond one's power to redress—and what can be done for such a man, where pecuniary relief is not wanted, and whose sorrows you cannot remove?"

I have this moment received a letter from my father, with one enclosed to Mrs. Men-
ville,

ville, from her uncle; it was sent to Sudbury, as supposing our family knew her address; shame on him, that he had not been the first to protect her from the insults she has received; I wonder much what he can write about now, after such cruel neglect. I hope our friend Harry is arrived in India e'er now; I like that young man, he has a good heart, and I am sure will do well. My father writes that he has had a visit from Mr. Martin, who is now gone to France for a month or two; I wish he may keep all his good resolutions, but he is gone to the land of frivolity and dissipation; old habits too often return, when encouraged by example and tempted by folly, to resume them; if he returns without being infected, I shall think highly of his sincerity and fortitude. I am sent for to Mrs. Menville. Good heavens! I am out of all patience; was ever malice and wickedness carried to such a height! this uncle has sent the following letter, which I copy for your perusal; but my dear injured friend

friend will write you her sentiments and
afflicting determination, which nevertheless
I hope to prevail on her to alter.

I am ever, dear madam,

Your sincere and affectionate

B. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

MR. SEYMOUR TO MRS. MENVILLE.

Niece,

I Have received a letter from your husband, acquainting me with the shameful manner in which you live, ever since you withdrew yourself from his house; also that you corresponded with that Harley after you became his wife: fye upon you, to be so wicked and ungrateful; no wonder (you behaved so ill,) your husband should seek comfort and pleasure wherever he could find it; yet had you not left his house, and gone it seems in the neighbourhood of a Lord Longfield, who

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is now your gallant, he would never have exposed you, but lived upon decent terms with you at least. As for the affair of Mrs. Thurkill, you ought to have been blind to it, when he behaved well to you, but you brought it all upon yourself. However, neither your husband nor myself chuse you should go on to bring disgrace upon us; I have the management of his business now, and so we propose, as you pretend to deny your guilt, to bring you to the proof. You and your child shall go to France, and board in a convent; if you consent, I have leave to add fifty pounds per year to your income; if you refuse, we shall know what to think of you, and shall cast you off for ever. Mr. Menville having forgot to mention the name of the place you lived at, I send this to your old cronies the Ellis's; though it's a shame for them to wink at such doings. Soon as you receive this, write me an answer directly; at present I am sorry to call myself your uncle.

THOMAS SEYMOUR.

LETTER XX.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

MY dear Lady Wentworth, I have often heard excess of misery abuses the torpid mind, and causes exertions of fortitude which lesser evils fail to do; at this moment I experience the truth of the observation. Under the vexations I have suffered, I struggled for patience and composure, but the refractory heart often repelled my efforts, and the tears of the night exceeded the assumed cheerfulness of the day. The last letter I received from Mr. Menville, was a severe

vere blow at the time, yet conscious innocence supported me under it; this letter of my uncle's has entirely cured me of sorrow or regret; that Mr. Menville should accuse me so falsely to my relation; that he, to whose interference I owe every misery; that *he* should believe the aspersions on my character, and throw me off like a guilty creature, without deigning to enquire how far I deserved such treatment. Such insults, my dear friend, have raised me above myself; I will submit to their wishes, I will accept of the retirement pointed out to me, and let *them* feel, let the unworthy authors of this scheme be made sensible, that no outward circumstances can depress a mind, guarded by rectitude, and supported by innocence. Mr. and Mrs. Colemore are much enraged, and advise me very strongly against submitting to such arbitrary designs, but I have made up my mind; 'tis my fixed determination to obey my husband in every point that is not inimical to what I owe my own honour; he has an undoubted right to place
his

his wife and child where he pleases ; I never will contest that right. Whilst he left me at liberty to live where I chose, I thought I should conform most to his liking, and my own inclinations, by living retired in the country ; unhappily I fixed on a wrong spot, which has given colour for the accusations against me ; I will now prove to them, no attachment to persons or places, shall prevent me from doing my duty, and obeying the wishes of my husband in every thing I can do. My friends may murmur, but their judgment must applaud me. Miss Neville is earnest to accompany me, but I have positively refused ; her friends will doubtless soon return to England ; she may yet enjoy tranquillity in the bosom of her family ; I will not be the means of depriving her of it. The gloom of a convent is little calculated to speak peace to a mind that suffers from self-reproach, as she continually does. No, my good friend, I will have no companion but my sweet child ; no attendant but little Patty. I have written my uncle the following answer.

Sir,

Sir,

I Unconscious of deserving the suspicions, I may say accusations, of Mr. Menville, or the severity of your pen, I can wrap myself up in my own innocence and integrity, and despise the malice of my enemies. Had Mr. Menville, when he drove me from his house, by an alternative I could not with honour hesitate in my choice of; had he condescended to have pointed out a place of residence for me, when compelled to leave his castle, I should certainly have conformed to his orders: but I was permitted to go where I pleased; yet even then I consulted his attorney, and retired to a house he recommended. Now that Mr. Menville has chosen a place for his wife to live at, I have only to hold myself in readiness to obey his commands. It is indifferent to me what part of the world I reside in, when reprobated by my husband, and cast off by my relations. My own heart justifies me, and I am content. Whenever you or Mr. Menville signify your orders,

orders, as to time and place, for my removal, I will instantly comply with them.

I am, sir,

Your most humble servant,

E. MENVILLE.

As my *uncle* was sorry to consider himself as *such*, I had too much pride to recognise the relationship by my signature. I owe him nothing, therefore shall make no undue submissions. I have prevailed on Miss Neville to accompany my friends to Sudbury, but they will not leave me 'till my future destination is determined. Mrs. Colemore has just acquainted me with her advice to you, of sending my letters to Mr. Menville; I hope nothing has been done in it, and I earnestly entreat no such step may be taken. Time and patience will do every thing, I will not hazard my friends to the chance of receiving insults, which might too probably be the

case, while the tide of prejudice and dislike is so strong against me. I cannot convey to you the mixed sensations of my mind at present; grief, however, has no share in it; 'tis pride, confidence and resignation; 'tis contempt and disdain of my unworthy accusers: I feel myself elevated above my situation, and am determined my conduct shall speak for itself. Let me conjure you to let nothing transpire concerning me to your friends. I am well, and not *unhappy*. That *your* felicity may daily increase, is the earnest wish of,

Your affectionate and obliged,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

CAPTAIN HARLEY TO MRS. COLEMORE.

A Thousand thanks to you my dear obliging correspondent, for your quick return to my last letter. That your charming friend is well, and Mr. Colemore and yourself with her, I rejoice to hear; and to find that her fortitude is equal to the evils so heavily laid upon her, is the only consolation I can possibly receive. Mrs. Neville is much recovered, for which she is greatly indebted to the kindness of Lady Wentworth; Mr. Moleworth is also considerably amended,

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beyond

beyond expectation, and 'tis settled, that in one month we shall all return together; yet how I shall bear to live in the same country with Mrs. Menville, knowing she is injured and insulted, knowing she must be deprived of a thousand little necessary indulgences her narrow income will not supply; oh! my friend, of how little value in my eyes is the fortune I now possess, when it cannot, or will not be permitted to serve her, who deserves diadems! I must not think, I must not talk of her; Lady Wentworth has sealed up her lips, she will not permit me to ask any questions; yesterday she received a letter, I was impatient and anxious —

“I assure you, my good friend Harley, Mrs. Menville is well, she is not unhappy; ask no more, it is her request, which has the force of a command with me, that I make no communications concerning her to any body; she must be obeyed, and whilst you see me easy, be assured nothing can be particularly amiss with her.”

This was all I could obtain; do not you be so inflexible; for heaven's sake continue to write during these next three weeks, for I have an uncommon depression of spirits, which seeks for consolation only from you.

As Mrs. Neville, on her return to England, will have nearly seven hundred pounds to receive, I would not wound her delicacy, by making any settlement on her, particularly as the moiety of her estate will bring in almost two hundred a year; I have therefore settled an hundred a year upon each of her children, for life, and the same sum on Miss Neville. Do not give me credit for any extraordinary generosity on this occasion, I promised Mr. Neville to provide for his offspring; and the little services I have been so happy to render them, is the only value I have set upon the fortune the kind Colonel bequeathed to me. I am much surpris'd I have never had a line from Lord Trueby; the state of his health was so indifferent, that I have many doubts of his existence. Such

women as Mrs. Thurkill and Mrs. B——, what mischiefs do they not occasion in families; how wide-spreading is their errors, and how severely do they fall on the innocent! do not, my exemplary friend, suppose I mean to exculpate man, and throw *all* the blame on women, no, I execrate the vile seducer, and know no punishment adequate to his crimes; but your lovely sex, by the little attention you pay to the character of a man; by the encouragement the gay libertine receives; the approbation attendant on gallantry and fashionable manners, and the severity with which you judge your own sex, certainly invite freedoms, and inspire confidence. 'Tis you alone can repel them; charming woman only can make a reformation in our conduct, by respecting herself, and demanding reverence and admiration, instead of that frivolous and licentious attachment which assumes the name of love, without feeling one sentiment of it.

If

If my mind was attuned to enjoy amusement and pleasure, I know no place more calculated for the purpose than Spa. Here are a number of foreigners of distinction; many noble families from England; the air is delightful, so clear and light, that it gives uncommon spirits to those who come from our foggy island; music, dancing, cards and routs, are in every house; gaming is here tolerated, under the protection of the bishop, and immense sums are lost daily. I have never yet entered into one of their parties; Clayton lost about three hundred pounds one night, and is satisfied. The Wentworth family is the source of my pleasures; I am particularly pleased with Sir Charles and Mr. Sackville; the former is a man of fashion, free from its follies; he is the best husband in the world to a woman of real merit. Happy couple! may no clouds intervene to interrupt your felicity. Mr. Sackville is a worthy respectable man, but plain in his manners and address, which however bear the stamp of respect and sincerity, and must

ever be pleasing. Mrs. Neville and Clayton join in best respects to your amiable friends, the former has written to her sister; may I presume to add mine; will Mrs. Menville hear the name of Harley; yet why should she not; why should a man who respects her for her intrinsic value, who is the sincerest of her friends, and would die to promote her happiness, even with Menville; why should not his respects be acceptable, when they do not militate against any one observance she may have imposed upon herself? yet do as you please, you know better than myself what ought to be done, and I submit to your laws. Hasten, my dear correspondent, hasten another letter to your

Faithful and obliged servant,

FREDERIC HARLEY.

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

MY dear Lady Wentworth, I have received an answer, a very short one, from my uncle, with a fifty pound note enclosed, desiring I would set off as soon as possible for Abbeville, where the Abbess or Superior would be ready prepared to receive me: I am to proceed to Dover, cross to Boulogne, and from thence to Abbeville. This is Tuesday: on Monday next I shall accompany my friends to Sudbury, stay one night with Doctor Ellis, and follow my
H 5 orders.

orders. Mr. and Mrs. Colemore go with me to Dover; Miss Neville remains with Mrs. Ellis.

How my little Emily may bear the sea, I know not; but the passage, I apprehend, is but a short one. My uncle takes not the least notice of the contents of my letter. Mercenary man! His inducements to marry me to Mr. Menville were with a view to aggrandize his family; and now he sacrifices my interests to the same motive; "he has the management of Mr. Menville's business." Powerful plea! Who would regard the character, the happiness of a niece, when put in competition with profit to himself? Sordid interest governs half the world.

When arrived at my destined habitation, I shall write immediately; I shall have leisure enough there for "meditation, even to madness;" but my spirits, my resolution will not desert me; and I trust I shall meet friends even in a convent.

Mrs.

Mrs. Colemore wishes to add a few lines.
I shall only say for the present, I am truly,
and in all circumstances, ever

Your affectionate,

And obliged friend,

EMILY MENVILLE.

Mr. Colemore spends half his time with
Lord Longfield, who, I find, is soon going
abroad. I hope he has not the smallest
suspicion he is an object of jealousy to
Mr. M.

ALLEN.

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LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

MRS. COLEMORE IN CONTINUATION.

I MUST write a few lines, indeed, for my heart is bursting with vexation. Yesterday Mrs. Menville received a letter from her wretch of an uncle, and determined to obey the lordly mandate. Mr. Colemore being engaged to dine with Lord Longfield, mentioned our intended journey next week. He was surprised.—“Mrs. Menville going with you? Then you have prevailed at last.”

“Would

"Would to Heaven we had!" replied Mr. Colemore, unguardedly; "but she is fixed in her resolution to obey her husband's commands, and is going immediately to a convent."

"A convent!" exclaimed Lord Longfield, starting; "a convent! Good God! for what reason is Mrs. Menville to be confined in a convent?"

"Because, my Lord, she is in your neighbourhood."

His Lordship clasped his hands together in an agony. Mr. Colemore, sensible that in his warmth he had said too much, was struck dumb.

"Mr. Colemore," said my Lord, after a pause, "you have said too much, not to raise my curiosity to hear more. I am but slightly informed of any particulars relative to Mrs. Menville. Her husband's conduct

is

is open to the world; but I think I could stake my honour and life, that she has behaved with such uncommon propriety, as will never justify such violent steps as he is about to pursue. If my being in this neighbourhood has any share in causing this distress to her, I will leave it in twenty-four hours.—Tell me, dear Mr. Colemore, tell me all.”

And he was foolish enough to comply; related every thing that we knew, the letters and insults, with her meekness and obedience. When the mischief was done he saw his folly. His Lordship was like a madman: he cursed Menville, Thurkill, uncle, and all the family; swore she was an angel, and should never be in the power of such brutes. “She go to France alone!” cried he; “no never!”

Mr. Colemore was quiet till he saw him a little more composed: he then argued with him on the propriety of her determination, and

and the probability that her compliance, and the regularity of her conduct, would open Menville's eyes, and give a favourable turn to her affairs.

"A favourable turn!" repeated his Lordship; "what, when he is tired of the creature with him, he is to return, and honour her, by taking notice of the most lovely and virtuous of her sex, after being contaminated by the most profligate. A fine recompence, indeed, he can make her now, with a broken fortune, and an estranged heart."

In short, Colemore was above three hours with him before he grew the least composed; and he saw, what he never suspected, that his Lordship was actually more than commonly interested for the happiness of Mrs. Menville.

After a world of chat, it was at length settled, that Mr. Colemore and myself should see her safe in the convent, for he conjured
up

up a hundred ideas of ill-treatment, and being carried away from the knowledge of all her friends.

When my husband returned, and told me what had passed, and how much he had been thrown off his guard, I could have cried for vexation, nor would I have my friend suppose his Lordship acquainted with a single circumstance for the world. I declare, after all, men are greater blabs than women; but Mr. Colemore is so provoked at her ill usage, that it is ever uppermost, and he can neither think nor talk of any other subject. Adieu; you will hear from me soon.

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

MY beloved friend, never was surprise equal to mine on the perusal of your last letter, and one which I received from Mrs. Colemore the following day. What wretches are Menville and your uncle! You confined in a convent under imputed guilt! Gracious Heaven! I have no patience. But they know not the mind they seek to subdue; how should they? Strangers to every fine feeling of the soul; governed by no motives but passion and interest; conscious of
their

their own baseness, they think it impossible to bear injuries without retaliation, and have no idea a woman can be truly good and virtuous from principle, and rise superior to ill treatment, from a conscious sense of innocence alone.

Oh ! my dear Mrs. Menville, your lot is indeed severe ; but your trials are only proportionate to your virtue and prudence, and you will shine the brighter for the base attempts to lower you on a level with themselves.

That infamous creature, Thurkill, is doubtless the contriver of all, she wants not understanding, she must be sensible of your superiority in every thing. She has injured, and therefore hates you. She wishes to provoke you to some act of desperation, that may throw a veil over your virtues. Poor creature ! she knows little what a mind like your's can bear, and how impossible it is for virtue to associate with vice ! Support
your

your spirits, my dearest friend ; exert your fortitude, nor let your enemies triumph in your sorrow.

You may be assured I would not communicate your last letters to any but my own family ; would to Heaven it were your's also. My uncle, aunt, and Mr. Sackville cry out, " Why will not Mrs. Menville accept of our protection ? why not seek comfort from her friends ? why not, indeed, but because she has peculiar notions of her own respecting her obedience to a worthless husband.

I know you will congratulate me on my uncle's recovery. He is amazingly altered for the better ; and our spirits are all revived of course. Mrs. Neville is a most pleasing woman : an habitual melancholy, which her recent loss has increased, prevents her from sharing in conversations, which, however, is easily seen by the little she does say, she is very well enabled to support ; but there is
a soft-

a softness, a delicacy in her manners, that greatly interests every one in her favour. We propose leaving Spa in about three weeks, and shall come through Bruffels; for I prohibit the Paris road, lest any of the party should fall in with Menville, and I would not answer for the consequence of such a meeting.

You may recollect a Mr. Mansel, whom I described to you as a male flirt. The sex are revenged, my dear. He was very ill when he came to Spa, in consequence of his disappointment where he least expected it: he got better, however, from the gaieties of the place; and not being quite cured, attached himself to a very pretty girl, who was here with an aunt, and appeared in a very genteel style. He met with his usual success; his insinuating manners won the girl's heart. *He*, proud of his triumph, conducted her about to all public places; and by his particular preference and attachment, distanced every other man.

About

About a week since the gentleman began to relax, to talk of friendship, esteem, and so forth, and lament that he should soon be under the necessity of leaving Spa. The young lady drooped, the aunt was mortified, when, lo! unexpectedly arrived from Brussels the girl's brother, who is an officer in the Hanoverian troops. He was soon informed of the business, and waited on the gentleman, gave him to understand, neither his sister's character nor peace of mind should be trifled with, and he must marry her directly, or give him satisfaction. Dreadful alternative! But the hero who could triumph over women had not the smallest inclination to fight: he remembered Hudibras.

“ O, what perils do environ

“ The man who meddles with cold iron.”

He was not fonder of a brace of bullets. He tried what excuses and palliation would do; but the hot-headed brother was resolute, and admitted of neither; consequently he
was

was compelled to determine, and of the two evils chose the lady, rather than the brother's courtesies: so two days after they were married. The girl has not a shilling, and is thought very gay and expensive. 'Tis very probable poor Mansel may be sorry; no kind brother ever interfered before in his *friendly* attentions, where he might have had a greater chance of happiness: but I dare say he usually took care not to extend his *friendship* where there *was* a father or a brother. Sir Charles says he looks very crest-fallen; so much the better: but, as he is now married, and can do no more mischief, he has my good wishes for his happiness.

I believe I never told you Mr. Sackville presented me with ten thousand pounds the day I married Sir Charles. The compliment was offered to him, but he declined the favour. I was *compelled* to accept it, although I wanted it not. Now, my beloved friend, do not, by an unjustifiable pride, reproach *me*: I accepted of favours
I could

I could not want, to oblige the donor; let *my* example have weight with *you*. The slender income you are allowed is insufficient to procure you the respect and attention you are entitled to. In convents, my dear Mrs. Menville, there is more regard paid to appearances than in any other place whatever. 'Tis a mistaken notion to believe no desire for dress prevails: I do assure you the nuns are particularly fond of seeing persons about them make an elegant appearance; they think it gives a consequence to their convent, and are not so abstracted, but the idea of rank and fortune has great influence on their minds, and procures both respect and indulgence. You must not, you shall not refuse from me an additional hundred a-year; and, to reconcile your pride and delicacy, consider it (that is, supposing your pride superior to your friendship) as a loan, and when the happy day arrives, that you are restored to your rights, *I* will *condescend* to be reimbursed. If you refuse me, *I* shall
know

know what to think of your love for me, and how sincere you are in your wishes for my happiness. I put it now to the proof, and shall judge accordingly of both.

I wish to Heaven I could see you at Abbeville; but being in a party, and in such a party as watch all my motions, and even looks, I dare not run the hazard. I told that Argus, Captain Harley, I would not be followed, nor my face scrutinized at such an unmerciful rate. Why, if I put on a grave face, "O! he is sure some ill news is arrived."—I cannot have a matrimonial squabble with Sir Charles, but he would directly conclude he must be concerned in it. Poor fellow! Don't be angry; I cannot but pity him.

Mrs. Neville seems inclined to live in the neighbourhood of Sudbury, if she can meet with a house: she promises herself Miss Neville will reside with her. The generous
Harley

Harley has done very handsome for her children, and settled a hundred a-year on Miss Neville. What a happiness, if every man of fortune would devote some part of it to the relief of the unfortunate. A humane heart is certainly a very great blessing to the possessor, if accompanied with the power of doing good. What delightful feelings, to raise the despairing mind to hope and comfort, to stop the tear of affliction, and give peace to the wounded breast. O! my dear, I am convinced, the miser, the narrow, contracted stoic, by hardening his heart, is sufficiently punished by the loss of those sensations, those sensibilities, which are delicious to the generous and benevolent, even when they draw the tears of sympathy.

I shall most anxiously expect to hear from you. Remember, it is in your power to make me happy; and that a proud spirit, resisting the entreaties of a friend, is incom-

patible with the virtues you possess, and endeavour to be distinguished for.

Every one of our family, who are your warm admirers, join in love and good wishes,—You have my daily prayers for your happiness.

CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER XXV.

MRS. COLEMORE TO CAPTAIN HARLEY.

I KNOW not, my friend, whether my good-nature does not outstep the bounds of discretion, in my wish to oblige you. Lady Wentworth certainly acts with more prudence; and I might perhaps with less difficulty refuse you personal communications than I can restrain my pen. Yet, as I have had no reason to complain of you, I have no right to withdraw my confidence, and therefore, depending on *your* discretion,

I 2

I shall

I shall write you a few lines only now till I am more at leisure.

Next Monday we leave this sweet cottage, but take our sweeter friend with us, perhaps to return no more. Miss Neville will reside at my father's, until her sister comes to England. Mrs. Menville has heard from her husband and uncle: they are brutes, both. You know not, perhaps, that my correspondence with you has been most maliciously and cruelly misinterpreted. No matter; we are superior to the malice of our enemies, which will one day recoil on themselves.

There is a charming man in this neighbourhood, a Lord Longfield: Colemore visits him often; but our prudent friend admits none but ourselves. He talks of going to the Continent soon; and, had you not been on the eve of returning, we intended introducing two amiable men to each other.

As

As Mrs. Neville can have no particular situation in view when she comes to England, we request she will come directly to us, and remain till she can settle herself perfectly to her wishes.

I did venture to present your respects to Mrs. Menville. "She was obliged for your *polite* remembrance."—She is very well, as lovely as ever, and a thousand times more respectable. O! that such a woman should be the wife of such a man!

I shall probably write you one letter more before your return, and speak a little more to the purpose than I do now; till then, may health and happiness attend you.

I am, sincerely,

Your obliged,

Humble servant,

E. M. COLEMORE.

LETTER XXVI.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

HERE I am, dear Lady Wentworth, safely lodged in the convent: I shall go back, however, to my sweet and much-regretted cottage. I had written Mr. Watson, and told him the necessity of leaving his house. I sent for the person who was accustomed to have the care of it, paid my rent, and a quarter extraordinary, which I thought Mr. Watson was well entitled to, as I left it without proper notice.

The

The day of our departure came, and, blame me if you please, I could not help being overwhelmed with sadness when I drove from the house. About a mile from it we saw Lord Longfield walking on the road. Mr. Colemore stopt the carriage; and he advanced to it: he bowed most respectfully.

“ I am happy, ladies,” said he, “ to have the good luck of wishing you a pleasant journey. To you, Madam,” added he, addressing me, “ I have never had an opportunity of expressing my warmest wishes for your happiness; but, sure I am, no one living is more interested than myself in your success in every wish of your heart.”

“ Your Lordship does me great honour,” I replied, “ and it must always contribute to my felicity, when worthy persons interest themselves in my behalf.”

I said no more : I dared not trust my voice, for just then my spirits were very low. His Lordship took leave soon after, and we proceeded on our journey. Nothing particular occurred on the road, and we arrived safe at Sudbury. Doctor and Mrs. Ellis shed tears of joy, I hope, at seeing us. I was extremely fatigued, and withdrew early to bed, but sleep was not my friend.

The next morning I came down to breakfast with a violent head-ach. Mrs. Ellis observed I looked very languid, and pressed me not to pursue my journey until the next day ; but I resolved to go on to London, sleep there, and set off early in the morning for Dover. Mr. and Mrs. Colemore accompanied me. I could not suppress a flood of tears when I took leave of Sudbury : what happy hours have I spent in that neighbourhood ! When I passed the church, where my dear parents lay, free from all their cares, unconscious of the distresses which their unfortunate daughter had to encounter with,

with, my eyes streamed afresh, and painful remembrance overwhelmed me with sorrow. My kind friends, without taking notice of my emotions, endeavoured to amuse my mind by various remarks on the passing objects. We got safe to London, spent the night there; I sent off a messenger to my uncle, to let him know of my arrival, and take his directions. He came back with a letter addressed to the Superior of the convent, Madame St. Joseph, and a line, wishing me a good journey. This cruel indifference, I own, cut me to the heart; but contempt succeeded my first feelings, and I rallied my spirits to support me through. Not to be tedious, we got safe to Dover, and embarked the same night in a packet for Boulogne, where we arrived about seven the next morning; and taking some refreshment, proceeded on to Abbeville.

When we arrived at the convent, when the great gates were unbarred with tremendous noise, and when my friends were com-

pelled to leave me, O! my dear Lady Wentworth, the horror of that moment will never be forgotten. The dear child, affrighted at the noise and my tears, clung to poor Patty, with terror in its looks. Mr. and Mrs. Colemore were drowned in tears. With repeated embraces we parted, unable to speak. I followed the Porterefs: the great gates were closed, and five or six old nuns came out to welcome me as an inhabitant of their peaceful mansion. I returned their civilities in the best manner I could, but entreated to be conducted to my apartment, as I was overcome with lassitude. I was accordingly shewn to my rooms. I was chilled with horror. They were white-washed, and only a small bed in each room, with two chairs and a table. I threw myself into the first chair, and wept aloud, and then fell into a violent hyfteric, a thing unusual with me. My poor girl, and two nuns who accompanied me, were frightened. Their kind endeavours soon recovered me to a sense of my wretchedness; thus cast off, branded with

with infamy, and given up to reproach, by those who ought to have defended me against every injury.

A nun of the most enchanting appearance now entered with some refreshments. She saluted me with a mildness and grace that insensibly engaged my particular notice: she seemed gratified by it.

“ Dear lady,” said she, “ let me entreat you to eat something; compose your spirits; you will find here every one disposed to serve and oblige you.”

Her kindness and sweetness of voice affected me. I complied with her request, and taking a little wine and water, found myself revived. Having my own linen with me, we made ourselves more comfortable; but my poor girl looked round her with terror and dismay. I passed a sleepless night; but in the morning I begged leave to have a little furniture for my apartments,

which favour was granted; and by sending into the town, I procured better accommodations.

I have now been here three days, and am become tolerably reconciled: indeed, I was ashamed to let outward circumstances so much discompose me, after preparing my mind to suffer much greater evils; after parting with my beloved friends, I had little cause to regret the inconveniencies of my present situation.

The attractive nun I mentioned, Madame St. Bernard, visits me often. She is about eight and twenty, a lovely face, a pair of expressive eyes, and one of the most graceful figures I ever beheld. I cannot help sighing to see so charming a woman secluded from the world; yet, if she has *no* cause for *regret*, why should I sigh! What are the mighty pleasures the world affords, that can compensate for the evils we are exposed to from the unworthy part of it! To me,
what

what has it been but a source of pain and anguish! In my earlier days, I saw a beloved mother hourly declining; I followed her to the grave; I was witness to the sorrows of a father; and when time had softened grief, and his emotions grew more composed, then his anxiety for his children's destiny preyed on his mind. By the persuasion of a selfish relation, he did violence to my feelings and his own. Riches and grandeur were to procure happiness. Alas! how deceitful the hope, how vain the expectations fixed on so slight a foundation! They have vanished from me like a dream. Happiness I never tasted, at least not those tumultuous emotions, not that wonderful flow of spirits, that gratification in public places and amusements, which appeared to make others happy. While Mr. Menville was pleased with me, I felt both gratitude and affection, and in his felicity I found mine. Now, my prospects are dark and gloomy, little to hope for, much less to expect. For my Emily's sake I wish to live: may she be
more

more fortunate than her unhappy mother! Why then should I regret the charming St. Bernard's seclusion from a world of disappointment and sorrow! O! she is happy, very happy; she has no husband, no child, to make those painful drawbacks on the kindness of her friends which I experience. —I must lay aside my pen.

I resume it in better spirits. I have just received a letter from Mrs. Colemore: they are safely arrived at Dover. Thank Heaven, they have not suffered from their generous attention to me.

Forgive me, my dear Lady Wentworth, for depressing your spirits by my melancholy: I will strive against it, and I shall conquer; I will consider, that to have my mind subdued, my health destroyed, will gratify my enemies. No—they shall not triumph over me. I will enumerate my comforts, not dwell on my vexations: the smiles of my Emily, the kindness of my friends,

friends, shall support me; the engaging nun will entertain me; I will study French, that I may speak it with more propriety; I will have an instrument, and harmonize my uneasy thoughts, when they arise, by music. In short, I will seek for amusement, and enjoy it.

I have half a mind to write this letter over again; but it may go; you will allow for the first painful feelings in such a situation; and as I repeat that I am more composed, more easy, and *determined* to continue so, I hope my dear Lady Wentworth will give me credit on the score of my former fortitude, nor be displeased at my want of resolution on my first entrance here.—Write soon and often: your letters constitute great part of my happiness; for I am ever

Your obliged,

And affectionate,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER.

LETTER XXVII.

ROBERT MARTIN, ESQ.

TO JOHN CHAMBERS, ESQ.

HERE I am, safely landed at Dover, after a very bad passage, which has so much discomposed me, that I shall stay a day and a night to rest myself, for I really am not fit to pursue my journey at present. After all, Jack, though I regretted the circumstance when in Paris, I now rejoice that Menville was not there: I have such a hatred and contempt for him, that, perhaps, if we *bad* met, an event might have taken place,

place, which of all others I wish to avoid. Mistake me not; I am not afraid of meeting Menville in the field, could his death or mine ensure the happiness of his lovely wife; but if *he* fell, I know the strictness of her principles, she would never see me more, nor could I expect it; if *I* had fallen, her situation might have been made worse from the brutality of her husband, but never could have been changed for the better by that circumstance. So that, all things considered, I think it is best as it is.

O! Jack, Jack, such intelligence; who should be now in this very inn, but Mr. and Mrs. Colemore, just arrived from France, after leaving Mrs. Menville in a convent; but in what part of France they dare not tell me without her permission. Cursed fate! *she* in a convent! I asked, if by her own wishes? The answer was in the affirmative; but it was given in such a manner, that I doubt they wished to deceive me. Mrs. Colemore is greatly dejected, Colemore is
very

very grave, and I am half mad. We shall set off together to-morrow morning. I shall not close this letter until I can pick up some farther intelligence.

I am now in my own lodgings, without having obtained the least degree of information. Colemore very candidly and kindly said, "I do assure you, Mr. Martin, was I at liberty to reveal Mrs. Menville's residence, I would not do it: she suffers already under suspicions she would disdain to incur; and where jealousy and a malignant heart are on the watch, to improve the most trivial circumstances into crimes, the interest you take in her affairs might most materially affect and hurt her. We shall be always glad to see you at Sudbury; your esteem for an amiable woman recommends you to Mrs. Colemore. Every intelligence we can give you, consistent with our own honour, and the restrictions Mrs. Menville has imposed upon us, you may command: but do not let your zeal injure her you wish to serve. She will
owe

owe nothing to the interposition of friends; every thing must be left to her own prudence; and from *that*, in time, every thing may be expected we can either wish or desire."

Disappointed as I was, Jack, I acknowledged the justice of Mr. Colemore's observations, and promised to follow his advice,

This morning I met poor Thurkill, rich Thurkill I should rather say, if he could obtain his money; but Menville retreating to France, his five thousand pounds is not forth coming. He seems, however, very glad to be rid of his wife, and can well afford to pay her the 200l. a year from the 10,000l. he had with her; but he says, "No, the same award gave me 5,000l.; when she draws on me, I will return a draft for the money on Menville. Let them try it if they will; I can but do as he has done: not

not a shilling shall she receive from my hands."

I think the fellow right. He has given up his house, sold his furniture, and taken proper care of all his money, if he does not lose it by gambling.

I have this moment heard a piece of news which has pierced me to the heart: poor Smith, the hosier, is become a bankrupt. I was told, since the death of Mary the father grew melancholy, neglected his business, his other children were too young to be useful, and the consequence is, he is ruined. Jack, Jack, there is a day of retribution; my conscience is wounded by the remembrance of the injuries I did that unfortunate family; and how many others may be sufferers by my vices! Smith, however, I *will* relieve. He is in the Fleet: I hasten to him.

I am

I am returned, overwhelmed with sorrow and remorse. Such a scene! Good God! Let the sensualist, the libertine, the hardened usurer, attend the prisons, and behold the many wretched victims, some to their own vices, some to the vices and cruelties of others; let them see such scenes as *I have this day*, and they will feel as I do now; horror and repentance will assail their bosoms, and they would gladly give up millions, if they had them, to avoid the stings of conscience.

When I entered the lobby, I enquired for Mr. Smith, and was directed to his room on the second floor, in such a district! Fearful that my presence would hurt, I sent up a little note, "A gentleman who has greatly injured Mr. Smith, feels the deepest repentance, and is desirous of making every recompence in his power." I was desired to walk up. I entered a very small room; facing the door lay a man extended on a bed. Smith was sitting at a table near the
small

small window, his head resting on his hand. When he saw me, (I was unable to speak,) he started up. "Gracious God!" cried he, "the murderer of my child! How dare you, Sir, ——"

He could say no more out sunk in his chair, and burst into tears. I was greatly affected myself; but drawing near him, "Suffer me, Mr. Smith, to assure you of my sincere concern to see you in this situation. I heard of it only this morning, and am come to offer you every assistance my fortune can give you."

"No, no," repeated he, with quickness, "I want nothing; I will accept of no favours from the destroyer of my poor Mary."

"You cannot, Sir, feel more sensibly, nor with more indignation of my past conduct than I do: but do not carry your resentment to an unjustifiable length; suffer me to make what reparation is in my power; and

and remember, that to forgive injuries is the part of a Christian."

" Pray, pray leave me; I want no assistance; I cannot bear to look at you. O! my child! my Mary, a victim to deceit and wickedness! I will owe nothing to thy assassin!"

" I *cannot* leave you, Mr. Smith," returned I; " you will owe me nothing: by putting it in my power to oblige you, to serve you, on me the favour is conferred. I am an altered man; I see the folly of my former conduct; I have deeply repented my behaviour in your family. Will you not encourage that repentance? Will you be more severe than God?"

He started, and looked at me.—" You mention the name of God, take care, Sir, you do not deceive yourself; but if you do repent, God forbid I should withhold my pardon for the miseries you have brought
upon

upon me and mine. I forgive you, Sir; but leave me."

"Not now; you have pronounced my pardon; let me beseech you, Mr. Smith, to open your affairs to me."

After many arguments, to little purpose, the man on the bed raised himself, and with a feeble voice, "Mr. Smith, be persuaded: you have children, consider them: you have still duties to fulfil. Your sorrow for the loss of one should not make you unjust to others. You must one day die: you will need forgiveness from the Almighty; deny it not to a repentant man. Accept his offers for your children's sake."

Poor Smith clasped his hands. "My worthy friend, I will obey your admonitions. O!" said he, turning to me, "that you had visited this place sooner; you might then, by timely benevolence, have preserved that poor man's life."

"And

“And why not preserve it now?” cried I, going to the bed. “Does any physician attend him? What is his disorder?”

“Past all cure,” replied the sick man; “a broken heart, worn down by sorrow, a victim to vice and injustice, betrayed by my friend, forsaken by a wife I doated on, persecuted, abandoned, and betrayed, what have I to do with life! I resign it without a pang; I look forward with hope, as to the end of a long and painful journey.”

I requested a physician might be sent for. He came. I entreated him to consider the patient's case: after a little consideration, he pronounced it hopeless.

“I told you,” said the poor man, “it was to no purpose. I feel, a short time will release me from pain and sorrow.—Mr. Smith, *you* are a *father*; remember your duties as such: accept the services of a repentant man, and God bless you all!”

He then lay quiet and composed. I enquired of Mr. Smith the cause of his sorrows.

“ They are briefly these,” replied he: “ This gentleman was a merchant in the city: he married a very beautiful and portionless young woman: she was gay, admired, and expensive. A friend of his came from the west of England on a visit; he was received with kindness and distinction. He paid particular attention to the wife of his friend, who unsuspectingly recommended each to the other.

“ One day this kind friend was more than particularly uneasy. The poor man present enquired into the cause. “ He had given a bond for three thousand pounds; he was unable to pay it, and expected nothing less than a prison.”

“ His friend, with a warm enthusiasm, bid him not despair; though just at that time
not

not in cash himself, he knew those who would supply him. He accordingly went among his friends, procured the sum wanted, and settled it, that the money might arrive in time to supply his wants. The obliged friend promised to reimburse him in a month, a fortnight sooner than the other had engaged for with his friends; nor had he the smallest doubt of its payment.

‘ Within ten days after this transaction, going out one day on ‘Change, on his return to dinner, his wife was not at home. He waited past the dining-hour; she did not return, nor his friend. Still unsuspecting, he eat his dinner, and supposed they had accidentally been delayed. Evening, night came on, no wife, nor friend, he began to be alarmed, sent every where in search of them, in vain. He passed a wretched night. In the morning a gentleman accidentally called in, and said he had met Mr. — and Mrs. — in a post-chaise, the day before, near Sittingbourne.

‘ This was almost a death-stroke. On enquiry, he found, they had not only taken every thing of value with them, but had also taken up a large property on credit. The time came on for payment of the money he had borrowed to supply his kind friend; he was unprepared, was arrested; all his creditors fell in upon him: he was thrown into this prison, without one kind sympathizing friend to console him. Grief, sorrow, disappointment, and want of proper necessaries, preyed on his mind, and threw him into a rapid decline. He now views the hour approach, with transport, that is to take him from a false, ungrateful world. He has never heard the least tidings of his wife nor her seducer; and ’tis supposed they are on the Continent, enjoying their ill-gotten spoils.’

This tale of woe spoke volumes to my heart. When I first knew Mrs. Menville, how base were my designs; how villainous my intentions! That charming woman taught me the difference between virtue and vice.

vice. I am her profelyte ; and every good action of my future life I owe to her alone.

I sent, however, for some wine, some biscuits, and other necessaries, with a proper nurse to attend this poor gentleman. I took an account of Mr. Smith's debts, and tomorrow I hope to set him free : death will soon release the other. I visited several other rooms, where misery and sickness were added to the horrors of a prison. Some dissipated, riotous persons I saw there, and doubtless many undeserving the least compassion ; but without a nice investigation, it is difficult to discriminate ; and as few people take the trouble to do that, the profligate, the gambler, the dishonest, are all huddled together with the good and unfortunate, equally unbefriended and disregarded. Surely the regulations of the prisons, the inspection of characters, are matters highly proper for the legislature to take notice of ; a discrimination might easily be made by the marshal and keepers of the prisons, and a bill

framed to relieve the unfortunate, without permitting the worthless to be benefitted by it.

I propose either settling Mr. Smith in business, or to make him a handsome yearly allowance, with a certain sum for his children, which ever shall be most acceptable to him.

Now, Jack, you will not doubt but my good purposes are all confirmed, since you see I am in earnest to make what reparation is in my power to those I have injured.

Mr. Smith is at liberty. He has accepted enough to re-establish himself in business with an honest, intelligent young man, who lived with him some years. He insists upon paying interest for the money advanced, and a bond, which bond I just now threw in the fire, that, as life is uncertain, it may never appear against him from any heirs of mine.

The

The poor merchant is alive, but it is supposed this night will be his last; and I have left orders for every accommodation his situation will admit of.—Believe me, I have found more real satisfaction within these two days than I have experienced for many years.—Adieu, Jack; take example, and be happy.

Sincerely your's,

ROBERT MARTIN.

LETTER XXVIII.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

MY dear, my beloved friend, how are you? My cheek still feels those tears that fell upon them when you embraced me for the last time. O! what a moment! to leave you immured within the walls of a convent, without one sympathizing associate to reconcile you to a situation so forlorn and melancholy. I impatiently expect a letter. Heaven grant your health may not suffer under such oppressions.

When

When we arrived at Dover, who should we meet with but Martin: he was just arrived from France in a different packet. As we could not conceal our business there, the man was almost beside himself: but we kept your secret faithfully as to your place of residence, and insisted upon his not interfering in the affair with any of your friends. He faithfully promised to observe our request. I am very much pleased with him; his behaviour, his conversation is so entirely different from the opinion we once entertained of him, that I really believe he is, what he wishes to be thought, a reformed man. The sincerity of his esteem for you cannot be questioned. He told Mr. Colemore, "When I first knew Mrs. Menville, I was an abandoned fellow; I wished, I studied to seduce her, even before I thought Menville treated her ill. The strict propriety of her behaviour always awed me; but on a particular occasion, when I forced myself into her presence, I received a check which has influenced my conduct ever since. I adore her still,

but with that virtuous passion, if I may be allowed the expression, that has no other wish, no other view but her happiness, independent of any gratification to myself."

Do you not congratulate yourself on having made such a total revolution of manners?—On our arrival at Sudbury, we found our friends extremely anxious on your account. My father bids me tell you to be careful of your health and spirits, and assure yourself, many, very many happy days await you yet.

Your letter is this moment delivered.—Thank Heaven you are so well reconciled to your situation. Pray encourage the attention of the amiable St. Bernard: I love her already for her kindness to you. I expect to hear the history of several of your nuns; for I cannot be persuaded, but that far the greater part of them are placed there by compulsion; and if any inclination for the

the world still dwells on their minds, how wretched must the poor creatures feel!

Miss Neville has had another epistle from her sister. Within ten days or a fortnight, we may expect the whole party. We are looking out for a house in our neighbourhood for Mrs. Neville, and I promise myself much pleasure from the acquaintance.

Pray write soon; for, although your's must be a very still life, and afford but little variety, yet constant information of your health is necessary to our happiness here.

Every thing expressive of affection and the most perfect esteem, my friends desire me to say for them; and I know your heart will do justice to mine, and believe me ever

Your truly affectionate,

And obliged,

E. M. COLEMORE.

K 6

My

My father has just received a letter from Anthony. He is in Brussels, and has drawn for a sum much beyond his settled allowance. My father will honour *this* bill, but intends to write the young gentleman, future requests of that kind will be refused.

LETTER XXIX.

LADY WENTWORTH TO MRS. MENVILLE.

MY dear Mrs. Menville, your letter, which I received yesterday, has in some measure relieved my anxiety, although it cost me a flood of tears, particularly the first part. O! my friend, keep up your spirits, and you will yet triumph over your persecutors, and cover them with confusion.

Some very interesting scenes have taken place here within this last fortnight. About that time arrived at Spa, Count Ossuana and
his

his two daughters, who, it appears, had been on very friendly terms with Captain Harley, during his short residence at Madrid. (Mrs. Colemore knows all the particulars.) Of course Harley waited on them, and was obliged to devote great part of his time to the service of the ladies. He one day requested me to permit him the honour of introducing them that evening to me, as we were all to meet at the Dutchess of C——'s assembly. I could not certainly make any objections. We met, and Harley led me to the ladies, who received me with the utmost politeness, and gracefully thanked me for the honour of my notice. They are lovely women: the eldest, Antonia, has such sweetness and sensibility in her countenance, as interests you, and engages esteem: the younger, Isabella, is a most elegant figure, with an air of grandeur that repulses freedom, and commands respect; and, though a much finer woman, never, I think, will gain the admiration which her sister invites, and she demands.

In the course of the evening, I made my observations: the beauteous Antonia could not conceal her partiality to Harley; I saw it in every glance and motion: on the contrary, Isabella, though she preserved outward forms of good breeding, looked at him with disdain and dislike.

I received an invitation to breakfast with them the next morning; Harley with me. When he called, curiosity induced me to remark the different behaviour of the ladies, and enquire into the cause. He then entered into a detail of his acquaintance with them, and with which, Mrs. Colmore being informed, possibly you are no stranger to. He added, that Antonia, resolute in her refusal of the Duke de Solis, after Harley's departure, had incurred the displeasure of her father, and had been treated very severely, which had deeply affected her health and spirits. Her sister constantly reproached her for her preference of an Englishman, and an heretic, though she had
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generosity enough not to mention it to her father, who, finding her health in a very precarious state, proposed this journey to Spa.

She said, her father having a great esteem for Captain Harley, and doing *more justice* to her sentiments for him than her sister had done, was glad to meet him there: on the contrary, Isabella upbraided her with keeping a correspondence, and giving him intimation of this journey. "Conscious," added Antonia, "that I have only a *proper* sense of Captain Harley's merits, and that I am unjustly suspected, I find it very difficult to conduct myself in such a manner as I wish to do, without justifying the suspicions she entertains, or treating a worthy man with a coldness he does not deserve."

This was what Antonia told Harley; and he was, he said, equally puzzled how to act in this delicate business.

We

We attended the ladies at breakfast. Sir Charles, who understands Spanish, received abundance of civilities from the Count, who complimented him on speaking a language few English gentlemen paid any attention to. The ladies, particularly Antonia, were profuse in their expressions of polite acknowledgments for my condescension, as they chose to style it; but the French language is so copious, and so polite, that they always exaggerate in their compliments. I was very much charmed with my reception, so unlike that stiffness we naturally expect from the Spanish ladies. But they informed me, their mother was a native of France; and the Count, in compliment to her taste, relaxed very much in his manners, of which this journey was a proof, as the Spanish women, in general, seldom travel beyond their own country. We prevailed on them to favour us the following day to dinner, and took leave, mutually pleased with each other.

Our

Our company came; the ladies most elegantly dressed. I really think the Spanish habit the most becoming in the world. I introduced my aunt and Mrs. Neville, who were struck with admiration at the beautiful sisters.

After dinner, when we retired, Antonia complained of a little faintness. I attended her into the garden; she grew better.

"You know not, my dear lady," said she, "how partial I am to the English; and that partiality daily increases. Great are our obligations to Captain Harley for procuring us the honour we now enjoy. Your aunt is a charming woman; and Mrs. Neville, I think you called her, one of the most prepossessing figures I ever saw; so gentle, so interesting, so amiable. Pardon my curiosity; Is she a widow?"

"She is, Madam," I replied; "her husband has been dead about two months."

"I thought

"I thought so from her black dress. She seems intimately acquainted with Captain Harley."

"Yes, Madam, he was a particular friend of Mr. Neville's."

"I think," said she, with a faint smile, "I think it not impossible he may hereafter be a particular friend of her's also. They seem attached to each other."

"Only as friends, Madam," I replied. "Captain Harley will never think of Mrs. Neville in any other point of view."

"Indeed!" exclaimed she; then, after a little pause, added, "He is a most amiable man; I am surprised he remains unmarried."

"A disappointment in his first attachment, Madam, I believe, precludes all thought of any engagement at present."

"I am

"I am grieved to hear that," returned she, in a faltering voice; "may I ask what impeded his first attachment from taking place?"

"The lady's relations, Madam, proposed a better match in point of fortune, and she thought it her duty to follow their advice, and obey their commands."

"Then I pity both," said she; "the lady was a heroine, and I hope is happy. Poor Captain Harley, how I grieve for him. And is the lady married?"

"She is, Madam."

"Ah! well," cried she, sighing, "I wish I had her resolution. My father wants me to marry; but I cannot, no, I *cannot* obey him, should he place me in a convent for life.—I have been very impertinent, Madam, in asking so many questions: will you forgive me?"

I pressed

I pressed her hand. "Dear Madam, you do me honour."

We now returned to the house: she took very polite notice of Mrs. Neville. I saw sufficient to assure me, her being *only* the friend of Captain Harley had given her an additional claim to the notice of the fair Antonia. In the course of the evening was mentioned our intended departure within a fortnight.

"I hope not," said the Count; "it will be mortifying indeed, to have begun an acquaintance which promises us so much honour and pleasure, if we are so soon to be deprived of it. We propose staying six weeks; cannot you," continued he, addressing my uncle and Sir Charles, "cannot you, gentlemen, prevail on the ladies to suspend their journey for that time?"

"I have no objection," cried my uncle; "I am a citizen of the world, my Lord:
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when my family is with me, all places are alike."

Sir Charles replied, "If the ladies can be persuaded, I shall not form a single objection."

"Very pretty, indeed," cried I; "here you are arrogating to yourselves all the merit, if there is any, of complying with his Lordship's obliging request, and the negative is to be thrown upon us: but if the ladies think like me, we will take our revenge."

"You shall decide for me, my dear," said my aunt, smiling.

"You are sure of my vote, Madam," added Mrs. Neville.

"Why then, my good Lord and Ladies, our leave of absence is prolonged: we females will remain some time longer, to profit by the
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the honour of your acquaintance. My uncle being an invalid, shall be permitted to stay and re-establish his health. But as for Sir Charles, Mr. Sackville, and Captain Harley, we will send them to England, as useless lumber, to lay by in the house till it suits us to return."

They all laughed excessively at my decision. Our guests expressed much gratitude for our complaisance. The gentlemen, in a very humble manner, entreated permission to remain as part of our suite; and, upon promise of good behaviour, we extended our mercy towards them. But I have more than once repented my promise.

The gentle Antonia is deeply devoted to Captain Harley: it is love, under the mask of friendship, which destroys her health, and preys upon her mind. Friendship! thou insidious, insinuating name; thou bane to happiness between man and woman; thou self-deceiver, leading on a delicate mind, by
gentle

gentle and imperceptible degrees, till the veil is withdrawn, and love, with all its train of ills, stands open and confessed! Ah! my dear Mrs. Menville, that unreserved confidence and attention which is permitted under the name of friendship, is often productive of great misery, and the noblest passion of the soul made subservient to the vilest purposes. In short, few men have delicacy enough to divest themselves of selfishness in their acquaintance with our sex. But here I must acquit Captain Harley. His address to Antonia is highly respectful and obliging, but without the least tenderness or freedom; he does not seem to *court* her notice, though grateful for any marks of it: *he is not in love*, *she* certainly *is*, and unwittingly, I believe; and as every day appears to add strength to it, I repent that we have promised to stay. I believe Mrs. Neville does the same, for she has been unusually depressed in spirits for this week past.

We

We shall not now leave Spa for this month to come: pray, therefore, my beloved friend, write very often: depend upon my prudence; nothing shall transpire you wish to have a secret from others.

The request I made in my last letter, which you had not received when you wrote, I shall expect you comply with, if you love or esteem,

Your affectionate,

CHARLOTTE WENTWORTH.

LETTER XX.

MRS. MENVILLE TO LADY WENTWORTH.

YOUR kind consoling letter, my dear Lady Wentworth, is just come to hand; and believe me, no human being can be more truly sensible of your kindness than I am. If I accepted a favour from any person living, it should be from you; nay, more, if ever I want your assistance, you shall not charge me with an undue pride in declining it: but at present I am very rich; I have nearly four hundred pounds by me, besides a hundred and fifty pounds a-year, which is more than sufficient

sufficient for all my wants, even in a convent, where, as you justly observe, they proportion their respect to your appearance.

I thank Heaven, my health and spirits are perfectly good. I have met with several most agreeable women here, though none equal to my first favourite, Madam St. Bernard, with whom you shall be better acquainted by and bye. The nuns doat on children. Emily has got the better of her first dislike to their dress and figure; she is with them great part of the day, and they are really emulous who shall shew the little creature most attention. The exact regularity in their devotions, and in their meals, and even in the few recreations they allow themselves, is admirable; their looks, their motions, are serene, humble, and obliging: most of them look happy; I hope they are so; yet I have my doubts sometimes.

I have now been here a fortnight: every thing is tranquil and quiet. How I envy
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those who live in this peaceful mansion from inclination; they have never known such sorrows as have harrowed up my peace, and destroyed my happiness for ever! But, not to dwell too much on self, I will speak of my amiable Madame St. Bernard. She has been most particularly attentive to me; the sweetness of her disposition, and the loveliness of her person, interest you greatly in her behalf. She was the other evening with me, when my spirits were rather low.

“ My dear lady,” said she, “ let me entreat you to consider your sweet child; keep up your spirits for her sake. I know not what the nature of your afflictions may be; but I know few in this life are exempt from sorrow.”

“ I hope, my worthy friend,” replied I, “ *you*, at least, are one of the exceptions.”

“ Very far from it, I assure you,” answered she. “ I have suffered severely, and
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am a victim to the vices and extravagances of those who ought to have been my protectors. To amuse and change the current of your grief into another channel, I will give you my history."

' I was born of a noble family. Unhappily, my parents died when I was unconscious of the greatness of my loss. I had two brothers: the eldest had my father's title; the younger one was in the army. I was placed in this convent for education. My brother, the Marquis, paid my pension regularly, and I was allowed a very handsome sum for clothes and pocket expences.

' When I was about seventeen, a young English lady, who was a Pensioner, had a brother came to see her. She took me with her to the grate. I saw he was a very agreeable man; but I took no particular notice of him. The next time he came I was engaged, and did not attend her. She told me, on her return, that her brother was

much charmed with me, had asked a hundred questions relative to my friends and situation, and *requested* to see me the following day. Novice, as I was, to the world, I saw the impropriety of this request, and steadily declined it. What passed between them I know not; but, with all the impetuosity of his country, when eager in pursuit, he applied to my brother, the Marquis, told him of his prepossession in my favour, and begged permission to make his addresses to me. The Marquis was surprised and vexed. He declined making an immediate answer, under the pretence of consulting his brother.

‘ The next day my brothers came to the convent, upbraided me in the severest terms for admitting the addresses of an Englishman and an heretic; and, far from believing my asseverations to the contrary, loaded me with reproaches, and insisted that I should enter upon my noviciate, as it was my father’s request, and their design, to make me a nun.

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I own to you, my dear Madam, I had no aspirations at that time to profess myself; I was therefore very much displeased at information I never expected. Whatever arguments I used were treated with disdain and contempt; nothing could alter their purpose. They requested of the Abbess I might never more be permitted to attend the grate, without their orders, and that I might begin my noviciate immediately.— Every desire was complied with; I was no more in the habit of seeing my friend, but at the refectory, or in church, and then a hundred eyes were upon us. Stupid, and overcome by this severe treatment, I submitted, without struggle, to the evils I could not prevent.

‘ One day I observed a great bustle in the class I belonged to. My young English friend, I was informed, was to quit the convent. We were not permitted to take leave, but before the whole community.

“ My dearest Louisa,” said she, “ may all good angels guard you. Do not take the veil; wait for happier times.”

‘ Two of the nuns interrupted her, and led her away: I was drowned in tears.

‘ The following day I received a letter from my brother, the Marquis, telling me Sir Edward Southwell and my younger brother had fought on the frontiers; both were desperately wounded, and their lives uncertain. He said, my infamous behaviour had disgraced my family, and brought both shame and sorrow on them; that they never would see me more until I was professed, the only expiation I could now make for my crimes.

‘ Judge, dear Madam, what I felt at this letter. Conscious innocence availed nothing against passion, prejudice, and cruelty; tho’ I appealed to Heaven I had never seen Sir Edward but once, and was entirely a stranger to

to all his proceedings; nothing I could say was believed; I was treated like an infamous creature, and commanded to take the veil. The absurdity was obvious: had I been the person they supposed me, unfit to enter into the world, surely I was less qualified to dedicate myself to God. However they were obstinate: I grew indifferent what became of me; and when my year of probation expired, assumed the name of St. Bernard, took the veil without reluctance, and from that time have sought to accommodate my mind to my situation. There are times when my heart proves refractory, but I try to subdue its murmurs, and remember my vows to Heaven.

‘I had the happiness to hear both gentlemen recovered from their rashness.—My brother, the Marquis, visits me now and then, and enjoys the fortune my father and uncle left me, and to which, I believe, I became the sacrifice.’

“ This is briefly my story, dear Madam. Many in this convent are victims to the pride and avarice of their relations. Some there are whom choice has induced to become nuns, but they are comparatively few; and, serene and tranquil as we appear to be, I fear every passion of the human heart prevails among us, as with those who reside in the great world: envy, jealousy, and malice are to be traced in many; and very few are exempt from the weaknesses of human nature.”

Here the amiable nun stopped. I embraced her fervently; I told her, whilst I resided in that monastery, I would endeavour to cultivate her esteem, and profit by her conversation. She wished me not to shew her any particular attention. “ If it is noticed,” said she, “ perhaps I may be laid under restrictions; and becoming an object of jealousy, shall not have it in my power to render you the little services I wish.”

What

What a melancholy situation to be *compelled* to take those vows which shut from the world for ever many amiable women, who might have been a blessing and an ornament to society. Few things in this life, my dear Lady Wentworth, would give me equal pleasure to the delight of seeing you; but it cannot be; and I have only to hope that at some future period I may enjoy that desirable blessing.

I am become perfectly reconciled to my situation. The nuns are pleased with my behaviour; I conform to all their rules without any reluctance. They adore my child, and that is the avenue to the heart of a mother. St. Bernard told me, she was informed, a gentleman had applied to have a lady, (whose husband was going abroad,) and a child, received as boarders, and to be accommodated with *every convenience* the rules of the house would admit of. This information has pleased me. It shews some delicacy as to my reputation, and a desire that

I should not suffer greater inconveniencies than the confinement, which to me is nothing.

I hope to hear from you very soon, and entreat you, my dear friend, not to be offended that I decline your generous offer of an addition to my income. I pay but seventy pounds a-year for myself, child, and servant; I have therefore eighty for extra expences, which is much more than I can want, independent of the money by me. You see, therefore, I am as rich as I can wish to be. Clothes, thanks to Mr. Menville's liberality, I have in such abundance, I cannot have occasion to purchase these seven years at least.

I am most sincerely rejoiced at the restoration of your uncle's health; also that Mrs. Neville submits to the dispensations of Providence as becomes a woman of sense and a christian.

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I frequently think, when in the church here, which is most beautifully decorated, that if our churches were more ornamented, it would create greater awe and respect, particularly among the lower class of people. There is a solemnity in the riches which adorn the altar; there is a certain respectful deference we feel for the priests in their truly-beautiful robes, which seldom fail to inspire devotion; and though their ornaments may sometimes be too showy, yet our's are surely too plain, and do not convey to the mind that sublimity, that respectful adoration, with which we ought to address the Supreme Being. I confess to you, I feel more devotion in this church than ever I experienced in any other, though without the smallest inclination of becoming a catholic; for I am not blind to the extravagant superstition and absurd customs I hourly see and hear. I only think that in our endeavours to root out popery, destroying images, and dismantling the churches of all ornaments, we have gone too far, made our
places

places of worship too plain; and partly by lessening the respect due to clergymen, if they behave with propriety, in giving them such scanty incomes, as render them rather objects of pity (too often of contempt) than of respect and esteem; and by the very indifferent, and often ruinous state in which our churches are, they fail to inspire that devotion which grandeur and solemnity most assuredly raise and animate in our minds. But I have done: I am not competent to this subject, and only wish it was in abler hands.

My best respects and grateful thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Molesworth, Mr. Sackville, and Mrs. Neville, for the interest they take in my affairs; nor will I withhold them from Captain Harley; for why should I think less favourably of his friendship than of others? Yet I must still request he may know as little of me as possible.—I am ever, with every friendly sentiment,

Your obliged, and grateful,

EMILY MENVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

MRS. COLEMORE TO MRS. MENVILLE.

HOW happy are we, my dear Mrs. Menville, in the receipt of your last kind letter, in which you tell us you are in health and good spirits. My admirable friend, persevere in your endeavours to preserve both, and all will yet be well. You are tried in the school of affliction, and like pure gold, will come forth without any alloy; you will shine the brighter from all the base attempts to obscure your lustre. Miss Neville has heard from her sister, their return
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to England is postponed for a month longer ; we have however taken a house, which will be ready for their reception by that time. We had a visit from Mr. Martin last week, the alteration in him is wonderful, he is now, in every sense of the word, a respectable man ; he must have had naturally a good mind, but fortune, fashion, and an early independence, led him into folly and vice ; a virtuous passion for an estimable woman, and the impossibility of ever obtaining the object of his wishes, has given a new turn to his mind, has humanized it, brought him to a sense of his former errors, and an earnest desire to make all the reparation possible. We are exceedingly pleased with him ; Mr. Colemore pressed him to stay a week with us, and he is now actually in the house. We have heard some very unpleasant accounts of your brother Anthony, he is still in Brussels, living at a very extravagant rate, which 'tis impossible his income can support, especially as 'tis said he plays very high ; my father is uneasy, and wrote to him by last post,

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some remonstrances on the subject, but if I know the young man, those remonstrances will produce only contempt and disregard. He must *feel* first, I believe, before he will pay attention to the advice of his friends. We have had a morning visit from Lord Longfield, to take leave of us previous to his leaving town, and going to the continent; how earnest were his enquiries after Mrs. Menville, how anxious his wishes for her happiness! he is a charming man, a character so truly valuable, exacts the highest respect. He told me Mr. Chapman, the melancholy man, expressed great regret at parting with him, but could not be persuaded to forsake his cottage, or give up his walks on the hill; his Lordship said, "Before my departure, by degrees I drew him into an acquaintance with my chaplain, who is also curate of the parish; he is a very worthy man, and of a reserved and sedentary disposition; they appeared mutually pleased with each other, and I requested they would consider my house, gardens, park, &c. entirely

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tirely as their own, and every thing in it, for their mutual accommodation. I have therefore hopes, continued he, that whenever I return to the Vale, I shall find him less abstracted, and more companionable than when I left him." His Lordship could not be prevailed on to stay dinner, but entreated I would present his most respectful good wishes to you.

I think we may now daily expect to hear from my favourite Harry, if not from India, yet from the Cape or St. Helena; I hope his letters will not miscarry, from Mr. Menville's absence, and your residence unknown. Mr. Colemore goes to town next week, and will call at the India House, and make what arrangements he can, to prevent any mistakes. We hear nothing of the Shepherd's, they have no correspondents at Sudbury; strange they should leave it at their time of life; I am pretty sure their *virtuous* daughter does not desire their company; my first dislike

like of that woman originated from her improper conduct to her parents. An impertinent obstinate daughter can never be good in any relation through life, for if deficient in those first duties of love and gratitude to the authors of her being, her heart must be corrupt, and her subsequent behaviour to her husband and friends, rather to be lamented than wondered at. How sweet are the rewards of virtue! how consoling to the oppressed and afflicting spirit, that those evils which wound us, are not the consequence of vice, nor a neglect of our principal duties. Oh! my dear, when you can look back to the years of childhood, and to those of maturity, without self-reproach; when your conduct has been such, as all the worthy must approve, how are your feelings to be envied, and where is the sorrow that can inflict equal wounds on you, to what that wretch Turkill must feel, in her gayest and most dissipated hours! doubt not, my dear Mrs. Menville, of your being the peculiar care of Providence,

Providence, who in its own good time, will restore you to happiness. That the day may not be far distant, prays most sincerely

Your affectionate and obliged friend,

E. M. COLEMORE.

All our family, Miss Neville and Mr. Martin, tender their best respects.

END OF VOL. III.



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